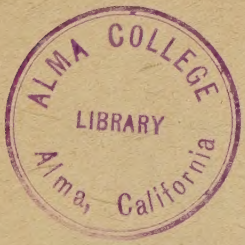
THOUGHTS FOR ALL TIMES

JOHN S. VAUGHAN

DUW-A-DIGON

THOUGHTS FOR ALL TIMES

VOL. I



The Church Review for December 20, 1900, says: "The book is full of suggestive and beautiful thoughts, and should be a welcome present to teachers and others; it is attractively got up, and the print is delightfully clear."

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✠ JOHN S. VAUGHAN

Bishop of Sebastopolis

1911

THOUGHTS FOR ALL TIMES

BY THE

RIGHT REV. MGR. JOHN S. VAUGHAN, D.D.

BISHOP OF SEBASTOPOLIS

AUTHOR OF

"LIFE AFTER DEATH," "DANGERS OF THE DAY," "CONCERNING THE HOLY BIBLE," "EARTH TO HEAVEN," "THE PURPOSE OF THE PAPACY," ETC.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL GIBBONS

AND A PREFACE BY THE

RIGHT REV. J. C. HEDLEY, D.D., O.S.B.

LATE BISHOP OF NEWPORT

"Meine Meinungen sind mein Eigenthum, meine Handlungen können durch das Landesgesetz beschränkt werden"

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I

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INTRODUCTION

TO THE FOURTH EDITION

BY

HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL GIBBONS

THE human heart is captivated more readily and more effectually by love than by fear. As children that love their parents serve and obey those parents more cheerfully and willingly than children who are actuated merely by fear, so people in general are drawn to the practice of virtue and attracted to the service of God more efficaciously by the power of love than by the principle of fear.

It is true that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," yet it is only the *beginning;* for love is the completion of wisdom: "perfect charity casteth out fear, because fear hath pain, and he that feareth is not perfected in charity." 1 John iv. 18.

Many persons find the service of God very hard, and the way of salvation difficult, because they do not love God; and they do not love Him because they do not know Him. "He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is charity." 1 John iv. 8.

Whoever throws light on this powerful and magnetic principle of love smooths the way of salvation for thousands, and becomes a great

benefactor of mankind. This the Right Rev. Monsignor Vaughan has done in his excellent work, "Thoughts for All Times." From this truly valuable book the reader gets a deeper insight into the meaning of the words of the beloved disciple, "Let us love God, because God first hath loved us." 1 John iv. 19.

After giving convincing proofs of the *intensity* of God's love for us, the Right Rev. Author beautifully explains the consoling principle of God's *personal* and *concentrated* love for each one of us *individually;* for St. Paul says: "He hath loved *me*, and delivered Himself for *me*."

We cannot be said to love a person whom we do not know. On the other hand, our love and esteem for a person grows on acquaintance, increasing accordingly as we discover new excellencies in that person.

Our love for God increases in proportion to the growth of our knowledge of God. Monsignor Vaughan is very happy in his exposition of the attributes of God, giving special prominence to God's goodness and mercy. His beautiful and powerful illustrations remind us of the simple yet forcible parables by which the Divine Master so efficaciously detached souls from the fleeting pleasures of this world, and inflamed them with ardent desires of attaining to the mansions of their Father's house.

The Right Rev. Author is remarkably ingenious in discovering similitudes between the natural and the supernatural. His mental acquirements are varied as well as profound. Works of this kind, simple, solid, and attractive, are much needed in our day. We wish this most excellent work "God-speed" in its great mission of drawing souls

to God. We should be glad to see a copy of it in every household in the land. It needs only to be known to have its merits appreciated. We congratulate the publisher of the American edition, Mr. O'Shee, on his energy and zeal in placing this rich mine of religious thought within the reach of all by publishing it at such unusually low terms.

In "Thoughts for All Times" the student will find a flood of light illuminating the principles of his theology; the priest and the catechist will find new mines of material, rich in illustration; parents will find much needed help in the arduous task of detaching the minds of their children from the things of this earth and directing them towards the affairs of heaven. From this book all will learn more clearly the meaning of the encouraging words of the Apostle: "You have not received the spirit of *bondage* again in *fear;* but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father)."

BALTIMORE,
Feast of the Nativity of the B.V.M., 1899.

PREFACE

THIS is an age when every good and Christian writer who can "get himself read," as Carlyle would say, should print and publish as much as he can. For as evil writings do incalculably more harm than evil speech, so good writings are indefinitely more efficacious than mere spoken addresses. Our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIII., has exhorted us to oppose writing to writing—"scripta scriptis,"—to use the press to fight against the press. It is consoling, therefore, to welcome a new book by a writer who can securely count on a large number of readers.

Every conscientious and capable writer deserves respect and encouragement. There is so much talk in the world, that without the example of those who take pen in hand and put down in order and carefulness what they have vigorously thought out, human speech would before long begin to lose its power of affecting human faculty. There are many, no doubt, who write without publishing. It is to them, especially if they are priests and pastors, that we owe whatever freshness, fulness and stimulating power there is in the sermons of the present generation. They dig assiduously, and they find treasure. Did they not write, they would be as other men, or preachers—that is to say, empty, dry and childish, turning the hearts of

cultivated men and women against the word of God, and making solitudes round about the Christian pulpit. To write, if the writer is honest and conscientious, is far from an easy work. It is so much easier to talk—in a way—than to search for ideas, to reject what is too common or too obvious, to work out a view, to stick to the point, and to make one's sentences grammatical and shapely.

It would be a mistake to call these essays of Monsignor Vaughan by the name of sermons. They have neither the sermon form nor the sermon tone. It is true that the greater part of the book deals with religious subjects. It is true, also, that in some places the writer takes the opportunity of enforcing a moral point. But they are essays, not sermons. The difference lies chiefly in the attitude of the author. A sermon supposes a preacher—and a preacher is an official personage, standing in the sanctuary, and clad in ministerial robes. The essayist claims no official position, and speaks as one man to another. His audience is not his flock; but individual men and women, with faculties that can understand, and important interests to think about. There is no reason why such topics as God and God's love, the Blessed Sacrament, and the Last Things should not be calmly and earnestly discussed, without strong appeals to the feelings, or that assumption of authority which is so useful and so necessary on fitting occasions.

This book contains some twenty papers, most of which have already appeared in print.[1] They are distributed in three divisions and may be said to fall under three heads. First we have five essays

[1] In the pages of *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record*.—J.S.V.

on God and the Holy Trinity. The "Love" of God, the "Nature" of God, the "Wisdom" of God, make up three of the titles found in this first part. Without being abstruse or scholastic, the treatment is solid, interesting, and suggestive. The two essays on the "Blessed Trinity," first, as Reflected in Man and next as traceable in the Irrational Creature, are good examples of that kind of "apologetic" work which does not pretend to be demonstration, but is valuable as showing how the mind might reasonably expect some such stupendous revelation as the Trinity.

The second division of the book opens with two very interesting disquisitions on the Blessed Sacrament. These are followed by two on the subject of Purgatory—showing the reasonableness of the Catholic doctrine, and the nature of purgatorial suffering. Then we have other two on that Divine quality and stimulus of the soul which are called supernatural grace, and the manner in which, through grace, a human being may be united to God.

The third division is more miscellaneous. In the "Riddle of Life" we find a useful exposition of the end and purpose of mortal life. "Dust to Dust" unmistakably indicates a lesson to be learnt from death. "Man a Microcosm" is a study on the difference between man and the beast, leading up to the consideration of those supernatural motives which man has the power to see, if he will. "Pain as a Motive" explains itself. "Heroes: True and False" is an examination of the state of mind which prevents most men from becoming saints. The paper that follows, entitled "The Inconsistency of our Faith and Practice," pursues this subject still further, and insists on the view that what is required is not so much to know more than

we do know, but (like a St. Francis Borgia contemplating the dead Queen) to realise what we know already. Then follow two useful controversial papers on Protestantism. The book also contains an essay on "Vivisection."

It will be evident from this brief enumeration that the contents of the book here offered to the public are largely theological. This is true. But, to my mind, nothing is more needed at the present day than to bring theological thought within reach of all who will take an interest in it. It is the fashion in Protestant countries to pretend to distinguish between theology and religion. There is a distinction, undoubtedly. One is knowledge, the other is spiritual activity. But as spiritual activity is not a mere instinct, like that which makes a bee build its cell, but rests on intelligent spiritual views, you cannot have it without such spiritual views—and these views, which are furnished by the teaching of the Faith, are made large, clear and scientific by theology. For theology is not a mere study. As Lessius so well says in the dedication of his treatise *De Summo Bono*, "Theology should make a man not merely learned, and an able disputant, but wise, holy and detached from all things earthly." No one who dwells assiduously in the contemplation of Divine things can help feeling their influence in his heart. There may be theological writers who make their theology very dry. But the author of this book seems to have hit what Lessius calls the happy medium—*inter scolasticum et asceticum*—between science and spiritual reading, which is calculated to make everyone who reads his pages a better man in proportion to the growth and development of his knowledge.

Knowledge of this kind, whether we call it theology or not, is absolutely essential, not only for priests, but for everyone who pretends to read and reflect. When we think of it, there are very few books in the English tongue which treat theological subjects in a fashion suitable for the general reader, and at the same time solidly and with authority. Of non-Catholic theological writings there is an enormous and increasing abundance. Of such theology as they have, Anglicans and Dissenters certainly make the most. We have dissertations on God, on the Fall, on Grace, Sin, Reconciliation, Heaven, Hell, and a hundred other topics. The theology of these books is naturally of every shade of orthodoxy and heterodoxy; but many of them are written in a popular and taking style, and command a very wide circulation. It is certain that many Catholics are attracted by such writings, and read them. It is impossible that such readings can but unsettle faith and affect the purity and vigour of Catholic conviction. It is the constant labour and anxiety of priests to prevent the more intelligent members of their flocks from taking up the cheap, well-written and well-meaning periodicals and volumes which undoubtedly supply a natural and instinctive want in a Christian mind—the want of information about God and the soul, time and eternity, this world and the world to come. The only effective way to cope with such a danger as this is to give our people a sufficient supply of reading of the right sort. Even if there were no competitors in the field, the Catholic flock have a right to the intelligent and attractive exposition of their holy religion—a subject which more than any other lends itself to treatment at once precise and devo-

tional. Precision and orthodoxy are secured by the training of the Catholic priest, who spends many laborious years in acquiring what he puts forth to the public with so much care and persuasiveness. A devotional tone comes naturally to one who writes for the good of immortal souls. If I am not mistaken there are large numbers of our English, Irish, American and Australian Catholics who would readily accept any book, written with a fair amount of literary power, which shall place their religion before them with fulness, with security, with devotional emphasis, and at the same time in a language that they can understand.

✠ J. C. H.

FOREWORD

TO THE EIGHTEENTH EDITION

THE popularity of this little work is sufficiently attested by the simple fact that it has already reached its eighteenth edition.

Though most of these editions have been of 1,000 copies, the last, as well as the present, edition have been of 2,000 each.

Since our aim is to sow good seed among so much cockle that the enemy scatters everywhere, we have greatly reduced the price of our modest work, with the hope of extending its circulation by bringing it within the reach of a still wider circle of readers.

Most of the notes, as well as the quotations in foreign languages, have been omitted. One or two fresh notes have been added, and the final chapter is entirely new.

The usefulness of these two handy volumes has been still further enhanced by the addition of an index, which will be found at the end of the last volume.

✠ THE AUTHOR.

Ascension Day, 1911.

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PART I

THOUGHTS FOR ALL TIMES

CHAPTER I.

INFINITE LOVE.

WHAT the sun is in the material order, that love is in the social and moral order. As the sun burnishes the tips of the mountains, lights up the valleys, and converts seas and rivers into liquid gold, making a Paradise where but a moment ago all was cheerless and dark, so love casts a charm over the commonest life, and infuses warmth and colour, and beauty and pathos, into the most ordinary and humdrum existence. The newly-born infant lives, develops and grows strong as it basks in the sunshine of its mother's love; and even grown-up men and women turn as naturally and as eagerly towards a devoted friend, as the sunflower is said to turn towards the sun.

Of all topics that can engross the mind, the only one of which men never seem to tire or grow weary is love. It forms the very warp and woof of romance and of story. It is the soul and vivifying principle of poetry and fiction. It is the unfailing inspirer of art, and painting, and music, and song. It creates the valour of the soldier, the daring of the explorer, the plodding perseverance of the scholar, and the unflinching courage of the martyr.

Under its influence the weak become strong, the despondent hopeful, and the niggardly generous. It changes, transforms and ameliorates whatever it touches; and infuses a nobler and higher impulse wherever its influence extends.

It is so congenial to man, so completely in accordance with his natural temperament, that he cannot wholly dispense with it, unless indeed by God's grace he rise altogether above nature. If, in sooth, there be in this world one poor sufferer more sure than another of exciting compassion and awakening sympathy, it is the lonely and desolate heart that has no one to befriend it, no one to address it a kind word. What notion indeed do we instinctively form of heaven itself, but a place of pure unclouded love? And what is the worst picture we can draw of hell, but a place where love is stifled and extinguished, and cursed hate and jealousy hold sway and rule supreme?

This would prove a sad and dreary world but for the bright, warm sunshine shed by loving hearts. For love illuminates our darkness; it causes the desert itself to blossom as a garden, weaves threads of golden splendour into the dull drab texture of a cheerless life, and creates a veritable paradise even on the confines of hell. It is sweet to be loved even by the dumb, unconscious beast. The shepherd tending his flock on the lonely mountain-side finds solace in the friendly yelping of his dog; while the Arab in his tent feels the arid desert less lonesome, and the night less drear, when the familiar neighing of his tethered steed breaks upon his ear.

But higher, by an immeasurable distance, is the joy that kindles at the delicious intercourse of man with man. The doting parent positively beams

with happiness when his children press around his knees, the love-light gleaming on every feature, and lips all eloquent with endearing words. Yet, the intensest of all mere earthly delights is that of the bridegroom as he leads his bride triumphantly to the altar, to pledge eternal friendship to her in presence both of God and man.

Yes! Even human love is full of beauty and of gladness. And why? Simply and solely (as it seems to me) because it is a shadow; a poor, unworthy and feeble shadow, indeed, but yet a very real shadow, of one of the most tremendous and sublime realities, *viz.*, God's overpowering love of us.

If the love that is born of creatures can be so welcome, so cheering, so gladdening, and so soul-inspiring, what are we to say, what, indeed, *can* we say, of the love of Him who is not a creature at all, however perfect and how exquisite, but the Infinite and the Uncreated? What is all earthly affection compared with the fierce consuming fire of Divine love burning in the Sacred Heart of the world's Redeemer? On this earth we hardly dare expect to gain the respect of anyone much above us in rank or station. A poor, rough peasant scarcely looks for love from a mighty king or emperor. The utmost he dares hope for is compassion, consideration, condescension and sympathy. Yet God, though infinitely removed above us by nature and essence, deigns to love us in the fullest and truest sense of the term, and in a far more generous manner than any creature ever did or ever can. In plain truth, all love, such as we find among men, is but a dim and uncertain reflection of the love of the Creator for His creatures. The impassioned sense of tenderness of a fond

mother for her only child, or the all-absorbing devotion of the bridegroom for his youthful bride, scarce merits the name of love; nay, it is (even when purest and deepest and most intense) but the veriest mockery of love, and no love at all, when compared with the love that God bestows on even the least soul in the state of grace.

After all, it is clear that man can love only according to the capacity of his nature, and how cramped and straitened it is! God's nature, on the other hand, is infinite and unlimited, and He loves us with His whole being. Nor did His love begin in time, nor with the first dawn of our own existence. His love for you and me is like Himself, in this at least—that it is *eternal*. Throughout the unnumbered past æons and cycles He not only knew us and contemplated us in His own mind, but He loved us also. In fact, but for this love, we never could have been. It was His love, and His love only, and not the thought of any interest or advantage that He could expect to derive from our existence, that determined Him to call us from the hollow womb of nothingness into a state of actual being. Behold, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee" (Jer. xxxi. 3).

To anyone who at all realises the indescribable majesty and unapproachable glory of God on the one hand, and the ineffable tenderness and depth of His love on the other, there is something positively intoxicating in the thought. Who would ever fear, or doubt, or hesitate, or despair, if he were really and indeed intimately conscious to himself that the loving arms of Omnipotence are wound about him all the day long, and that nothing in heaven or on earth can possibly approach to

injure or molest him without permission from that Divine Lover, whose love on the one hand is infinite, and whose power on the other hand is commensurate with His love? To be *fully sensible* of all this is to be calm and happy, and to share in some measure in the felicity of the saints. *Sed, quis est hic, et laudabimus eum!*

There are two wondrous qualities in the love God bears towards men which can never be sufficiently realised, and which we ought therefore frequently to call to mind and ponder over: firstly, its intensity; and, secondly, its essentially personal character.

I. Like a true, warm-hearted lover, He is never weary of expressing His love, and, as it were, whispering into our ears fresh assurances of His enduring attachment. At one time in the most explicit terms, and at others by figures and symbols, He seeks to enforce the same sweet truth upon us, and to persuade us more and more fully of the depths of that charity which the Apostle tells us "surpasseth all understanding" (Eph. iii. 19). "Fear not," He exclaims, "for I have redeemed thee, and called thee by thy name: *thou art Mine!*" (Isa. xliii. 1). "I have loved thee with an *everlasting love*" (Jer. xxxi. 3). And in what measure, and with what strength? He answers the query Himself: "As the Father loved Me, *so I have loved you.*"

And, as though mere verbal expressions of His unending love were not sufficient to reveal its depth and extent, He has recourse to images and figures. He represents Himself on one occasion as the devoted father of an ungrateful and prodigal son. The son has heartlessly abandoned his father, and squandered his time and his fortune, living riotously among strangers in a foreign land. Yet his

dissolute life and disgraceful conduct cannot extinguish that paternal love. On the contrary, the devoted parent yearns to welcome back his darling, and to enfold him again in his arms. Each day he ascends the brow of the hill and scans the distant plain to see if he can discern any traces of the well-beloved child retracing his steps. At last, after many a fruitless effort, his eyes detect a changed and careworn figure. In spite of rags and tatters and dissolute look and disconsolate condition, the father, with unerring instinct, recognises his wayward boy. Yet no thought of anger or reproach enters his heart. No words of rebuke or chiding rise to his lip. His face is not even ruffled by a scowl or a frown. All his just and righteous indignation is overpowered and quenched by the strength and vehemence of his love, which wells up from his heart and stifles every other feeling. At once he hastens to receive him. In his joy and gladness the father forgets his son's baseness and ingratitude, and all the grief and sorrow and bitterness and pain he has caused, and hurries along to embrace him, and to clasp him with infinite tenderness to his bosom. He clothes him with the finest linen, he puts sandals on his naked feet, decks him out in the best he has, and places the ring upon his finger, and the staff in his hand. The fatted calf is killed, the banquet is prepared, the choicest wines flow like water ; the whole household is made to share in the general rejoicing, and all feast in happiness and delight, because he that was lost is found ; he that was dead has come to life ; and the poor erring son has returned once more to his father's home. What a beautiful and consoling picture of God's attitude towards sinful and repentant men !

At another time our Lord represents Himself as a shepherd watching over His sheep, gently leading the flock to rich pastures, carefully defending them from prowling wolves and fierce beasts of prey, and plodding on for many a weary mile, after those that have wandered astray. Or, again, He is the Good Samaritan, who, finding a poor traveller wounded and disabled on the roadside, and robbed and stripped of all his goods and possessions, descends from His own horse, and stops to tend and dress his gaping wounds, pouring in oil and wine, places him on His own beast, and lays him in a place of safety.

Indeed, our Divine Master seems to lay all nature under contribution. Even among irrational creatures He searches for images and types expressive of His solicitude for us. He likens Himself now to the hen that gathers her little ones under her wings; now to the pelican that was believed to feed her young with the blood from her own breast; or, again, to the vine giving life and nourishment to the branches: "I am the vine, you are the branches." He is also "the tree of Life" (Apoc. ii. 7); the "Light of the world" (John viii. 12); the "Bright and Morning Star" (Apoc. xxii. 16); the "Shadow of the Rock" (Isa. xxxii. 2); the "Door of the sheepfold" (John x. 7); the "Head of the Body of the Church" (Col. i. 18); and, sweetest title of all, the true "Bridegroom" (Matt. ix. 15). A chapter might be devoted to the explanation of each one of the names which are applied by the Holy Spirit to God, so pregnant are they with meaning, and so much do they tell us of Him whose special name is LOVE. *Deus charitas est.*

But true love never rests satisfied with words.

It longs to prove itself by deeds, and cannot remain inactive. God's love is no exception to this rule. It manifests itself in ten thousand beautiful ways. It meets us at every turn. It overflows upon us from all sorts of unexpected channels and on all sorts of undreamed-of occasions. It would be worse than useless to attempt to enumerate a tithe of them here. But we must at least touch upon a few of the most remarkable manifestations of God's goodness towards us.

We have already hinted at one, *viz.*, our creation from nothing : a wholly gratuitous act which must be traced back to God's immeasurable love, as to its true source, and to love alone. But our dependence upon Him does not end here. God not only made us, each moment He preserves us, and supports us in life ; watches over us as a mother over an only child, and defends us from a thousand evils. All that we have and are, are effects of His love. Every object whose presence brings joy to us, whose beauty gladdens us, whose friendship cheers and brightens existence, is from Him. All that in any way administers to our bodily comfort or mental content ; all that is in any degree pleasant, delightful and joy-yielding in social intercourse or family life ; all, all without one solitary exception, are tokens and earnests of His undying love.

But even this exuberance and generosity could not satisfy the longings of His heart. Indeed, it is the characteristic of excessive love never to admit it has done enough. Thus, having rifled all nature of its treasures to lay them at our feet ; having given us the earth for our temporary abode ; the sun to illumine and warm us ; birds and beasts and every living creature to subserve our interests ; fire and

water, and steam and electricity, and all the other powers of nature to labour for our benefit, He wished to do still more. He determined to lift us above nature; yea, as far above nature as the heavens are above the earth. His love induced Him to confer upon us a dignity, a position and an honour surpassing the uttermost capacities of mere nature. A dignity, in fact, which all the wealth of the material creation put together could never purchase, *viz.*, the dignity conferred by Divine grace received in Holy Baptism. Yes; wonderful to say, by grace we are made "participators of the Divine Nature"; adopted sons of God; brothers of Christ Himself; heirs to an imperishable kingdom; and princes of the only truly Royal House of the King of Kings; a dignity too great for us in our present state to understand; and which words cannot express; which mind fails to conceive, and which no created intelligence is capable of *adequately* realising—to do so would be to measure the measureless, to pour the whole ocean into the hollow of our hand.

This is a treasure too priceless to be purchased, too magnificent ever to be really merited; giving us a claim to heaven itself, and to the possession of the infinitely Perfect for the whole of eternity. "I am thy reward exceeding great" (Gen. xv. 1). When we have said this, we can say no more. Even a Power that is measureless, and a Wisdom that is limitless can give us nothing greater, nothing more exquisite, nothing more divinely beautiful and precious than the Infinite and the Eternal; and in possessing Him, we, in the strictest sense of the words, possess all things. Nevertheless, He was still dissatisfied. Love seeks, as far as possible, to put itself on an equality with the beloved. Now

God could not make us equal to Himself, since the very idea involves a contradiction. It is not possible for Him to lift us up to His own level, and to transform us into gods. But, though He could not place us on a level with Himself, He could at least abase Himself and sink to our level. This His infinite love prevailed upon Him to do. He assumed our nature ; became a man as truly as we are men ; clothed Himself with our infirmities and necessities, and "dwelt amongst us" as a true member of the human race.

Nor was this an act of passing condescension. He took upon Himself our human nature to retain it. He is still man—verily, as truly man as He is truly God. His human body and His human soul are at this very moment rejoicing the blessed in the highest heavens ; and never for one instant, throughout the endless ages of eternity, will He dissociate Himself from our manhood. Again and again we hear the mystery of the Incarnation spoken of and referred to ; but who will give us the power of appreciating all that it means to us men and women of the earth ? In associating Himself with us in this truly wondrous manner, God exalts the entire race in a degree that cannot be measured. He ennobles, elevates and honours every single member of the great human family. From the moment in which He "was made flesh," He is no longer our Creator merely, nor merely our Lord and Benefactor, our First Beginning and Last End, but He has entered into new relations with us, and has drawn ten thousand times nearer towards us. He has become our Elder Brother, our intimate associate, one of our own family ; bone of our bone, blood of our blood, and flesh of our flesh. What a ravishing thought ! that even the least of us can

claim a relationship, and *such* a relationship, with the Irresistible and the Omnipotent! with Him who rides on the wings of the winds; who poises the earth upon three fingers; who holds the oceans in the hollow of His hands; who can do all things whatsoever He pleases; without whose sanction nothing can stir in heaven or on earth; and without whose actual permission and co-operation not a sparrow falls to the ground, nor a dry leaf is swept away by the hurrying storm.

Wonderful as this undoubtedly is, it is far more wonderful to note that God not only became man (which might have been accomplished without one pang of suffering), but that He became, like us, a suffering man—a "man of sorrows, acquainted with infirmity" (Isa. liii. 3). His prodigal love moved Him to share not our nature only, but our distress and humiliations, our sadness and disappointments, and even our trials and temptations. He made Himself subject to fatigue, weariness, languor, and to the pains of hunger, thirst, cold, nakedness, labour, bodily and mental anguish, and finally death. And such a death! Too cruel, too full of bitterness and shame almost to think of, save with tears of sorrow and compassion. Not through any necessity—for is He not Lord and Master of all?—but through deliberate choice; out of pure love; in order to cheer us in sorrow; and to infuse strength and courage and a brave hope in our fainting and faltering hearts; and to draw out the sting from our death, by dying Himself for all.

Can love extend further than this? One might think not. But love is so mysterious a power. It is so unlike all else. It possesses such unsuspected resources. It is so strangely inventive. Oh! love will discover ways and means of encompassing its

designs, of which nothing but love would so much as dream.

Jesus Christ was not content to die, and then to depart from our midst for ever. "I will not leave you orphans" (John xiv. 18). Quite the contrary. He would be more than ever with us after His crucifixion. He would multiply His corporal presence almost indefinitely. Before that awful immolation upon the cross, He was, as man, in but one place in all the earth. Now, on the contrary, He deigns to dwell in every town and city and hamlet. In the vast metropolis; in the busy hives of industry; in the quiet country village; and in the humblest and remotest places of earth, He holds His court, and receives His friends. Wherever there are gathered together a few devout worshippers and a priest to administer to them, there too He is found in their midst. It is the same all over the world. As the express train, panting and throbbing under its hidden fires, hurries us along through France and Germany, Switzerland and the Tyrol, and we snatch hasty glimpses of a Catholic church tower or a cathedral spire, we know that He is there. When tarrying in foreign lands, how often the silvery notes of the Mass or Vesper bells, resounding through some sequestered valley, or across the waters of some slumbering lake or inland sea, stealing upon our ears, arrest our wandering thoughts, and lead us to muse on the love that has led God to dwell among His chosen ones in every nation!

What belated traveller in far-off climes, wending his tortuous way between rocky heights and mountain ranges, has not, while gazing as it seemed almost into the very clouds, beheld the precipitous walls of a convent or monastery,

perched upon the summit of some beetling eminence, or clinging like an eagle's nest to the crags and projections of some terrific cliff, and has not thought, as he gazed, that there too the King of eternal glory dwells under the sacramental species; where men have gone to pass their days in prayer and contemplation, far from the maddening, noisy, distracting crowd?

But this multiplied presence; this prodigality of love; this desire on the part of our Lord to be wherever a human heart beats, or an adoring soul lives, though a most astonishing effect of Divine charity, is surpassed by the institution of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. The great Lover of souls would be not only present, not only in the closest proximity, and if we may so express it, face to face with His chosen ones, but in actual union with each soul whom His hands have made. As a mother will not merely watch and tend her helpless offspring, but will draw the puny infant to her bosom, and, not satisfied with "kissing it with the kisses of her mouth," will offer it her breast, and thus incorporate her very substance with the substance of the child, so that it lives and feeds, and develops and grows strong on the very flesh of the mother; so does God the omnipotent draw us tenderly to Himself, and as it were incorporate Himself with our very substance in the Holy Eucharist, in such wise that we live our supernatural life through Him and by Him and on Him. "My flesh is meat indeed; My blood is drink indeed. Who eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him" (John vi. 56, 57). He truly and actually enters our souls; occupies our hearts; reposes within us as within a living tabernacle, and so possesses our very being,

when we place no obstacle in His way, that we may justly exclaim with St. Paul: "I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20). There in the very centre of our soul He holds His court. "My delights are to be with the children of men" (Prov. viii. 31); and so intimate and close is the union that then takes place between the poor creature and the powerful Creator, that Christ Himself does not hesitate to compare it with that mysterious union which is greatest of all and absolutely unique—namely, the union between Himself and the Eternal Father. "As the living Father hath sent Me, and as I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, the same shall live by Me" (John vi. 58).

It is impossible for anyone to think seriously of what Holy Communion really is, without feeling, if I may so express myself, bewildered, overwhelmed and almost confounded by the undreamed-of and wholly unparalleled depths of Divine condescension it supposes. It is so profound and unfathomable a mystery, and indicates a charity so measureless and infinite, that one feels almost as though one dared not think of it, lest the thought should crush and paralyse one's heart and senses. A kind of spiritual tremor or vertigo seems to seize upon one, such as one experiences in the physical order on looking fearfully and fitfully from the beetling edge of some gigantic height, down a measureless fall of sheer precipitous rock.

Oh! if our eyes were not heavy with spiritual torpor, and our senses not steeped in a lethargic sleep, I know not how we should ever dare to approach and receive into our heart of hearts Him whom the heavens cannot contain, and "who dwells in light inaccessible" (1 Tim. vi. 16). There

is nothing on earth that can compare with this union. No love less than infinite love could have devised or contrived half so beauteous or half so sumptuous a banquet for the weary pilgrim, wending his way along the dusty road of life to the great city of God.

Further than this we cannot go—at least not in *this* life. There is nothing between this and the Beatific Vision itself. In the adorable Eucharist we have all that we shall ever have in heaven. The differences are only accidental. When the consecrated particle rests upon our tongues, we hold within us all that constitutes the essential bliss of the saints in eternal glory; the difference is merely that we fail to realise it. We possess it, but without being able to estimate what we possess. If, by some stupendous miracle, our eyes were suddenly opened, we should find that we were really in heaven; or rather that heaven itself had come down upon us, and had entered into our souls. How countless are the ways in which God proves His love for men! We have but touched upon a few of them, yet we must reluctantly pass by others, so that a few words may be said on the *personal* nature of God's love.

II. I know of no point of more practical interest or of more pressing importance than this. Man yearns to be loved individually and personally, and on his own account, and not merely as one of a multitude. Thus, there is a danger of our very much under-valuing God's love for us, from the very fact that we know that He loves innumerable other creatures besides. We are naturally wont to estimate a man's love at a higher and higher rate, according as it is more and more exclusive. Indeed, we are inclined to regard with a certain air of

suspicion, and almost to doubt the strength and depth of a love which is shared by millions upon millions of others. We hunger after an affection which shall be not only intense but undivided, and focussed upon ourselves.

Now, this is, no doubt, a just way of reasoning when we are dealing with mere human, and therefore finite love. A weak human creature cannot by any possibility love a whole multitude with any degree of intensity. What is gained in quantity must, by the nature of finite things, lose in quality. The most fathomless ocean would soon become no deeper than a street puddle if its waters were spread over ten million millions of square miles. So the deepest and intensest human affection would soon be reduced to zero if divided amongst a vast number. True; but we must bear in mind that this arises from the necessary limitations of human nature, which limitations can have no place in God. Such reasoning, therefore, when applied to Him is utterly fallacious. The most essentially beautiful characteristic of God's love is just precisely that it is so eminently personal and so essentially heart to heart.

We may illustrate the nature of Divine love by comparing it with Divine wisdom. Thus: God knows all things. He reads the secret thoughts and most intimate yearnings of all men and angels at one and the same moment, and, indeed, for the matter of that, by one and the same act. He sees, clearly, fully, accurately, without confusion and without effort, every creature that ever was, that is, or ever shall be; He knows all as each, and each as all. Take any individual—say, myself, now reading this page. He knows me so intimately, so perfectly, so profoundly, and so exhaustively, that

it is metaphysically impossible that He could know me a whit more perfectly than He does. Even if, *per impossibile*, He were to withdraw His gaze from all other creatures in heaven and on earth to fix His whole mind upon me alone, and exclusively, nothing whatever would be added to the perfection of His present knowledge.

With us it is very different. We can direct our complete attention to one thing only, at a time; we can follow but one train of thought, at any given moment. Should we attempt to attend to many different things at once, indistinctness and confusion must inevitably result. Such is one of the differences between God's knowledge and ours. Now an exactly analogous difference exists between God's love and ours.

Let the reader thus muse within himself. God knows me and loves me, singly and individually, just as truly, just as intimately as though He knew no other and loved no other. He loves me no whit less because He loves millions and millions besides me. He loves me because He has made me; because His own Divine image—the image of the ever-Blessed Trinity—is indelibly impressed upon me; because He has adorned and enriched my soul by His heavenly grace, transforming it into a thing of extreme loveliness and exquisite splendour. And He loves me because I am His own child by adoption; an heir to His throne; and purchased with a great price (1 Cor. vi. 20). This anyone may say—and say with undeniable truth if his soul be in a state of grace.

The fact that God loves myriads of saints and angels together with me, and much more than me, cannot in the slightest degree interfere with the genuineness of the love He bears me personally.

If I alone existed, if God possessed throughout the measureless realms of possible space no other creature but myself, He would love me neither more nor less than at present, nor would His love be even the faintest shadow of a degree more personal. His love of me increases or diminishes with my own personal sanctity, but is absolutely independent of the amount of Divine love lavished upon others. St. Paul said: "He loved *me*, and delivered Himself for *me*" (Gal. ii. 20). With equal truth, I may employ similar language and say, *e.g.*, He watches over, not simply men in general but over *me*, ceaselessly and unintermittently. I may forget Him: He can never forget me. I may lose consciousness in sleep: He never, even for a moment, relaxes His guard over me. He follows me at every step through life with a providence so marked and so special that it could not be greater or more personal or more minute even though there were no others to provide for. On the other hand, were the existing multitudes of men and angels and of living creatures of all kinds even ten thousand times more numerous than they are, their government and control would tend in no measure to render God's care and solicitude for me individually less detailed or less special. He is not like a frail creature, to be disturbed or affected by numbers or multiplicity. The most delightful and special charm of God's love is just precisely its extraordinary individual character.

Practically, I may—indeed, I ought always to—treat with God in the same intimate way and with the same secret familiarity as though He and I alone existed, and as though He had no one else upon whom to bestow a thought. The more earnestly I strive to carry out His will, and the

more carefully I endeavour to please Him in all things, the more His love of me will deepen. Unlike the earthly lover, who may weep and sigh and pine in vain for one too distant to catch the words that breathe and the thoughts that burn, we know that God listens to every sigh, hears every sob, watches every tear, and measures every pulsation, as though no other task devolved upon Him but to contemplate the individual soul as it seeks to win His love. What a glorious impossibility! I cannot so much as think of Him, but He rejoices at it; or breathe an ejaculatory prayer, but He hearkens to it and blesses me for it. He is, in fact, present within me, and as absolutely and as wholly present as though He were nowhere else. No earthly lovers were ever so closely united, or so intimately present to one another, or so undistractedly absorbed in each other's affections as God and the soul in grace. Hence we must cast aside for ever all those prevalent, though utterly false notions, which, no doubt, arise from our tendency to apply to Divine love what can be true of human love alone.

It is only by realising what an intense reality God's love is, and calling to mind its extraordinary personal quality, that we can at all understand, I will not say the joyousness and buoyancy which habitually characterised the famous solitaries of old, but even their bare possibility. What man *could* pass ninety long years of unbroken solitude in the desert, like St. Paul of Thebes, without going mad, or, at all events, growing morose and testy, unless his love of God and God's love of him were something eminently actual, personal, and practical? The hermits, anchorites and solitaries of the early Church, and the silent religious

of various contemplative orders of the present day, are inexplicable on any other supposition. But in the midst of the cares and anxieties of an active life in the world, we too must draw our pleasure, joy and gladness at the same unfailing source.

Oh! beautiful and consoling doctrine! Each footsore and weary wayfarer on earth may truly exclaim: The Infinite and the All-perfect loves me, personally, intimately and individually—not as one of a vast indistinguishable mass, but me, N. N., with my own special character, qualities, disposition, antecedents and history; yea, He loves me with a love that is indescribable and inconceivable; which no language can express, no imagination picture, and no mind fathom, no thought reach, no heart encompass. A love which I cannot measure; which I comprehend not, and in this life cannot comprehend; a love which outstrips all figures and symbols, defies all numerical expression, and which would dilate and rend my heart with gladness, and so terminate my physical life, were I made fully conscious of it, a love compared to which all human love is cold and barren and hollow—in a word, He, the Almighty and Eternal, loves a soul in grace with an infinite love; and therefore with an ardour not only above, but immeasurably above, all created love, whether human or angelic.

It seems a bold statement to make, yet it is easily shown. To begin with, it is by God's express declaration, infinite in duration: "I have loved with an everlasting love." But, more than that, it is also infinite[1] in intensity; though only,

[1] The love God bears His rational creatures is correctly spoken of as "infinite." Yet the term may prove misleading unless accompanied by some explanation. It

of course, in the sense explained by the angel of the schools, the gifted St. Thomas Aquinas.

What is meant by love? To love a person is to wish him well. If, for instance, a man desires that another should enjoy health and happiness, and dignities and prosperity; if he actually bestows upon him riches, favours and honours (especially when there is nothing to hope for in return), we rightly conclude that the donor possesses a true love for his friend. Furthermore, the costliness of the gifts bestowed marks in some measure the degree of love. The more valuable the gift he wishes to bestow upon his friend, and the greater the good he seeks to procure him, the greater,

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may not be unprofitable, therefore, to remind our readers that while the love is infinite on the part of the Giver, it is necessarily finite on the part of the receiver. This love receives no limitation from the Divine nature, for it is identical therewith; yet it is, *de facto*, limited by the very condition of the creature. Thus: God gives Himself entirely (*in esse intelligibili, e.g.*, to a glorified soul in heaven). And, by virtue of the "lumen gloriæ," such a soul possesses all God (*totus*), but obviously not wholly (*totaliter*). Or, to put it in a different way: the soul in embracing God most undoubtedly embraces and enjoys an infinite good, but in an essentially finite manner. God is infinite, and God gives Himself to the individual soul. But the soul can possess Him only according to the measure of its capacity, which must, under every conceivable hypothesis, remain ever circumscribed and limited. Even the *humanity* of Christ does not receive the Divine gift and love infinitely, for St. Thomas teaches: "Humanitas Christi, ex hoc quod est unita Deo," etc., "habet *quamdam* infinitatem" (pp. q. 25, a. 6, ad. 4). So, R. P. Bellecius, S.J., writing of the benefits of God, says: "Et hæc beneficia Deus tibi contulit modo singulari, nempe *amore æterno*, non citius Se quam te amando; eoque *infinito*, videlicet eo ipso, quo Seipsum diligit; mereque gratuito, sine ullâ indegentiâ propriove commando." Exercitia, etc., p. 101.

evidently, is the love he bears him. Now, apply this principle to God, and ask what kind of good He seeks to bestow upon us. It is not a created good at all. It is nothing finite, however precious or exalted ; it is the Infinite, the Uncreated, and the Eternal, the absolute good. It is nothing less than God Himself. "I am thy reward exceeding great." We are made for nothing less than the possession of God for all eternity.

To confer a great good upon another is to love him with a great love ; but to confer upon another an infinite good, is, most assuredly, to love with an infinite love—especially when the donor can expect no return, and no equivalent. Yet such is the love of God for His children, even for the least and most humble of them all, so long as he is striving with all his heart to keep the commandments.

How sadly strange, and how strangely sad it is that, notwithstanding all this, men think so much of the love of creatures, so little of the love of the Creator ; that they set such an extortionate price on the puny affections of a sinful man or woman, and are so insensible to the measureless affection of God ; that, in a word, they will move heaven and earth, and defy hell itself, to embrace the shadow, while often allowing the substance and the reality to escape them altogether.

CHAPTER II.

THOUGHTS ON THE NATURE OF GOD.

REASON, alone and unaided, is sufficient to inform man of God's existence. Even the untutored savage and wild barbarian may find in this visible and material world proofs and arguments enough of His Divine presence. Yet, neither reason nor revelation can make clear and intelligible to us the intimate nature and attributes of that Supreme Being, whom the Scriptures remind us "no man hath seen at any time" (John i. 18).

Nor is this to be wondered at. Even of created beings, how extremely limited is our knowledge! Even in respect to the visible tangible world about us, how very little it is that we really know! What can the wisest philosopher, the profoundest scientist, the subtlest metaphysician tell us—I will not say of God, but of man; aye, or even of the simplest and most insignificant creeping thing that man crushes without a pang beneath his feet?

What, indeed, do we understand by life itself? What really *is* that mysterious, invisible, immaterial, energising principle within the body of a man, which keeps the heart beating and the blood ever coursing, year after year, through artery and vein, for the better part of a century and sometimes more? What is that strange power animating our fragile house of clay, which, though

spiritual and immaterial itself, yet sees through corporal eyes, hears through corporal ears, acts through corporal organs, and loves and languishes, and labours and lives in an earthly tabernacle? Though it abides within our own fleshly frame, yet we know not what it is. Nothing could be more closely bound up with us or more intimately united with us, for it is the chief part of ourselves; yet, near as it is, we can neither understand nor explain it, nor form any accurate notion of it even to ourselves.

Nay, more: life *in any form whatsoever* involves mystery. The life and power of movement even in a beast or an insect must pass away from our notice unexplained. We stand and gaze at the industrious spider deftly spreading its gauzy net on some waving bough in the airy ocean of the sky; we marvel at the beauty of the web, and at the regularity of its geometrical form, and the delicacy of its gossamer threads; we are charmed and captivated with the ease and dexterity with which its author binds strand with strand, and weaves together the curious complicated structure.[1] Yes, all this we can do. But when we begin to ask "how," and "why," and "by what impulse," and "under whose direction" these beautiful and delicate operations take place—well,

[1] Nothing can exceed the perfection of the minutest parts of the insect organisation in general. The finest strand in a spider's web, which can scarcely be seen, is said to be composed of no less than 4,000 threads. On a single wing of a butterfly have been found 100,000 scales, and on that of a silkworm moth 400,000, each of these minute scales being a marvel of beauty and completeness in itself. So thin are the wings of many insects that 50,000 placed over each other would only be a quarter of an inch thick, and yet, thin as they are, each is double.

we find ourselves proposing questions which a child might, indeed, ask, but which neither you, gentle reader, nor I, nor any living man, will ever be able really to solve—at least, in this world. Life, in all its multitudinous forms, is girt about with mystery. The acorn, germinating in the ground, and stirring, as it were, from slumber, to awaken into life, is full of wonders. Watch, indeed, any simple seed as it builds up out of the rude materials that lie around it some graceful form of waving plant or blushing flower, and think how hopelessly inexplicable is the process. Whence come the delicate green stalk, the tender leaves, the unfolding buds and opening chalice-cup, so exquisitely wrought, so skilfully pieced together, so admirably poised and balanced, and, like some swinging censer, scattering sweetness with every movement? Whence comes the gorgeous apparition of glowing colour and dazzling splendour, this vision of beauty that fails to startle us only because so frequently beheld? From what secret repository has it drawn the colours to paint the corona and the gold to gild the cup? —colours and tints which not even a Raphael d'Urbino or a Titian can hope to reproduce. A few weeks ago nothing was to be seen but a dark and barren stretch of loamy soil. On it we let fall a seed. Nursed by the warm sunshine and balmy winds, and fed by the dew and rains, it was successfully ushered into active life; and now, contemplate the beauteous object which that seed, like some skilled architect, has planned and constructed out of the dull unconscious earth—a crimson rose, or, perhaps, a tiger-lily. Who will sit down and narrate to us how the various elements were selected and brought together, and trans-

formed and arranged, and adjusted in such perfect symmetry through the agency of that silent and simple germ? A gigantic and hopeless task indeed! Scientists, botanists and horticulturists may, indeed, give names to the processes; but then, to give a name is not quite the same thing as to explain. No! the truth is, we may contemplate, we may wonder at, and we may admire the many mysteries of life in the commonest wayside flower or shrub; but to give them, or any single one of them, an exhaustive explanation is as impossible as to create them. That surpasses the power of man.

But if we are baffled by a shrub or a flower; if our proud intellect staggers and positively reels on its seat when striving to grasp and fathom the lowest and most imperfect forms of created life, how, in the name of common sense, can we expect to unravel the mystery of the Divine life of God, without beginning and without end, the source and author of all being? How, indeed, shall we gaze into the fathomless abyss of His incomprehensible perfections "who only hath immortality, and inhabiteth light inaccessible, whom no man hath seen, nor can see, to whom be honour and empire everlasting. Amen"? (1 Tim. vi. 16.)

We possess no faculty whereby we can measure any single one of His Divine attributes. Some faint notion may be formed of goodness, of wisdom, of truth, etc., yes, of *created* goodness, wisdom, and truth; but not of goodness, wisdom, etc., as they exist in God; for in Him each attribute is absolutely infinite and uncreated—not a quality, but identical with His substance and being, and wholly indistinguishable from it. And our finite minds can no more contain the Infinite than time

can contain eternity, or than a part can contain the whole.

Nevertheless, although the goodness of God is infinitely above our comprehension, yet that He is good is clearly seen in creation. The creation also proclaims His wisdom. It is manifested in the order and regularity of the measureless heavens; it is made evident in the times and seasons observed by the countless stars, as they hurry on in their courses through the trackless realms of unmeasured space; and, in fact, in all things, great and small; even in the faultless symmetry and elegance of the tiniest organic structure, such as the limb of a microscopic animalcule, or the mouth, masticatory organs, stomach and alimentary canal of the Rotifera, or what are popularly known as the wheel animalcules. And what we assert regarding the goodness and wisdom of God holds good also of His power, patience and mercy, and all else of which creation speaks to us. "For the invisible things of God are clearly seen from the creation of the world, being understood by the things that are made: His eternal power also and divinity" (Rom. i. 20).

There is another truth, however, related to the inner life of God, which is not by any means so clear and manifest in creation: a truth which, in fact, cannot be positively demonstrated from the contemplation of visible things, although (as we hope to show in a subsequent chapter) all visible things in some measure reflect it—and this truth God Himself has therefore been pleased to reveal directly. We need scarcely remark that we here refer to the adorable mystery of the ever-Blessed Trinity—perhaps of all mysteries the most difficult and incomprehensible. We may state a

truth, however, without fully understanding it. Just as we may say that an oak-tree will grow from an acorn, though we can in no way understand *how* it grows, nor unravel any one of the manifold mysteries of its organic development, so we may also state, and state accurately, the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, while, at the same time, we confess our inability to fathom it. And, what is more, we accept it, not as scientific men accept a theory or a supposed discovery—*i.e.*, because we think it reasonable or because it fits in with our preconceived notions and opinions—but simply and solely because God has deigned to reveal it to us.

Let us begin by stating the doctrine. The great central fact at the base of all supernatural religion is that God is absolutely simple and one ; and that there is no other God but Him. " I am the Lord, and there is no God besides Me " (Isa. xlv. 5). Now, being but One in nature, we may readily infer that He would be solitary and without any community of thought unless He were, at least in some respect, more than one. Throughout the whole realm of existing, or even of possible, creatures, there is not one that could furnish a really worthy or adequate object for God's contemplation, knowledge or love. Between Him and them there is no proportion ; in fact, all things, including men and angels, are in His dread presence as though they were not. What, then, formed the object of God's thoughts, the object of His contemplation, and the object of His love for all eternity ? Absolute solitude is, even to our way of thinking, utterly incompatible with absolute happiness. What, then, broke, so to speak, the eternal silence and relieved the unspeakable solitude of God ? He Himself tells us. He reveals the secret of His life. He informs us

that, though His nature is absolutely one and indivisible, yet this nature is shared by three.

Though there is but one God, nevertheless there are in this one God three totally distinct and different Persons—*viz.*, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.[1] All three possess not a similar, but the self-same nature. The Father is truly God, the Son is truly God, and the Holy Ghost is truly God ; yet the Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost is neither Father nor Son : yet each is God, and there is but one God. The Divine nature is not *divided* between the Persons : each possesses it in its integrity and fulness ; yet the Divine nature is not multiplied, but one and indivisible.

The Divine nature is the same in each, and differs only in the manner in which it is possessed. The Father has it *from none ;* the Son has it *from the Father alone ;* the Holy Ghost receives it *from Father and Son.* Yet the Father retains while He gives ; and the Son receives, though He always had, and never began to have, but, like the Father and the Holy Ghost, is changeless and immutable. Though there is a relation of sonship, and of fatherhood, and of procession, yet these are relations not of time, or of dependence, or of inferiority, but relations of procession or of origin.

The Father is not more ancient than the Son, nor the Son than the Holy Ghost. The Father is eternal, the Son is eternal, and the Holy Ghost is eternal ; but there are not three eternals, but one eternal. So, in a similar way, though the Son is born of the Father, He is not inferior to the Father, but equal and consubstantial with the Father : His

[1] Consult *A Manual of Catholic Theology, based on Scheeben's "Dogmatik."*

equal in glory, majesty, power, sanctity and wisdom ; and in nature one with the Holy Ghost.

The Father is omnipotent, infinite and omniscient ; the Son is omnipotent, infinite and omniscient ; and the Holy Ghost is omnipotent, infinite and omniscient ; yet there are not three omnipotents, infinites and omniscients, but only One infinite, One omnipotent, and One omniscient.

The three Divine Persons, possessing the self-same nature, are inseparable though distinct. Where the Father is, there is the Son, and there is the Holy Ghost—so that one Person by reason of His Divine nature must ever be accompanied by the other two.

Let us illustrate this by reference to the human nature of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is God. In Jesus Christ, therefore, there dwelt, in inseparable unity, the Father and the Holy Ghost. It was not the Divine *nature* which became man. Had the nature of God become man, the Father and the Holy Ghost would be truly man, as well as the Eternal Son. But since it was not the *nature*, but the *Person* of God, and not the three Persons, but only the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity that was made man, the Father is not man, nor the Holy Ghost, but *only* God the Son. But though neither Father nor Holy Ghost became man, they both are inseparable and eternally united with the man Jesus Christ, who, as God, is one with them, and, so far as His Divine nature and essence are concerned, indistinguishable from them.

Hence, in the Sacrament of the Altar, there is present not only Jesus Christ, but the Father and the Holy Ghost ; and when we receive the Blessed Sacrament the very Being and Substance of the omnipotent God enters into our souls, and with

His Substance the three distinct but inseparable Divine Persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

The inseparable connection of the Divine Persons with one another is brought about in the most perfect manner by their relations of origin. The produced Persons (*i.e.*, the Son and the Holy Ghost) cannot even be conceived otherwise than in connection with their Principle (the Father), and, being the immanent manifestation of a *substantial* cognition and volition, they remain within the Divine Substance and are one with It. The producing Principle, likewise, cannot be conceived as such, and as a distinct Person, except inasmuch as He produces the other Persons. "The Divine Persons constitute a society unique in its kind: a society whose members are in the most perfect manner equal, related and connected."

There is, to use technical terms, perfect circumincession, or comprehensive interpenetration, so that "each Person penetrates and pervades each other Person, inasmuch as each Person is in each other Person with His whole essence, and possesses the essence of each other Person as His own; and again, inasmuch as each Person comprehends each other Person in the most intimate and adequate manner by knowledge and love; and as each Person finds in each other Person His own essence, it follows that it is one and the same act of knowledge and love by which one Divine Person comprehends and embraces the other Persons."[1]

The doctrine here recalled to the mind of our readers is, of course, absolutely inexplicable and

[1] For a fuller summary of the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, in English, see *A Manual of Catholic Theology, based on Scheeben's "Dogmatik,"* by Wilhelm and Scannel.

incomprehensible. To try really to fathom it is to try with finger and thumb to pluck the stars from the vault of heaven, or to hold the waters of the vast Pacific within the hollow of our hands. Still, even this profound mystery may be, in some weak shadowy way, imaged forth and illustrated by creatures. Some notion of it, at least—however unworthy and incomplete—may be obtained (by way of analogy) through the study and contemplation of earthly things, and above all, and before all, by a thoughtful consideration of the soul of man, created, as it is, to the image and likeness of its Maker. To develop and explain these most wondrous and interesting adumbrations of God's triune nature in His works will require a separate treatment, so we must defer their consideration to the next chapter. In the meantime we may conclude by considering *why* God is pleased to reveal to us the incomprehensible truths of His own mysterious Being.

There are, no doubt, many good reasons. In the first place, that, knowing Him better, we may love and serve Him better. In the second place, that, growing more conscious of the infinite gulf that separates God from all that is not God, we may be filled with an ever-increasing and deepening awe and admiration of Him, before whom the very pillars of heaven tremble, and the angels themselves veil their faces. Another reason may be, in order that we may the better enter into the past eternal life of God, and understand how He could be supremely happy and exercise to the full all the activities of His being, independently of creatures.

But, passing over these and many other reasons that might be suggested, let us dwell for a few

moments on what is, perhaps, the most practical one of all.

God reveals mysteries to man, in order to exercise him in obedience, to force him to submit his highest faculty to Divine authority, to subdue his proud rebellious heart, and to humble his conceit. For consider : the intellect is the greatest and the grandest natural gift of God to man. *That* it is which raises him so far above all other visible beings ; *that* it is which sets the crown upon his head and the sceptre in his hand, and, in a word, makes him the monarch of the earth, the lord of the creation. Now, since intelligence is a gift from God, and held in dependence on God, God very rightly insists that man should, at least, acknowledge the gift, realise whence it comes, and pay fealty for it ; and since it is the *highest gift*, it is of the *highest importance* that this acknowledgment should be made.

In a word, man must submit his intellect to God, just as every other faculty of his being. He must bow down his proud spirit, and yield his judgment and personal convictions to the teaching of Divine authority. Just as obedience is nothing more than the legitimate service and homage of the free-will, so faith is nothing else than the legitimate service and homage of the intellect ; and the more difficult and obscure, and apparently contradictory and impossible, is the doctrine proposed, and the more completely it compels us to rest solely upon the rock of God's veracity, the more perfect and meritorious is the act of submission, and the more profound the honour and reverence paid to God.

In these days true faith is rare, because men are eaten up by intellectual pride. Science, or what

passes for science, is the idol of the hour. "What I understand," says the scientist, "that I accept; and what I fail to understand, that I as promptly reject." "What my reason approves, that I believe; and what my reason cannot attain to, I most emphatically refuse to believe." Such men read and lecture, and study and teach, and are listened to with such patient trust and humility by their followers, that at last they flatter themselves that they know all things; or, at all events, that they are in a position to investigate and even to pass judgment on every truth. They have measured the ocean, and weighed the earth, and counted the stars. They will offer to inform you concerning anything you may choose to ask them, from the length of the sun's diameter and its cubic contents in yards, down to the number of vibrations of a fly's wing per second, or the mode of progression of an amœba through a water-drop. Hence, having mastered so much, they insensibly begin to fancy that there is nothing beyond their ken. Indeed, we are all apt to forget the extremely limited range of the human intellect, so God recalls the fact to us, and humbles our pride by putting before us truths, such as that of the Blessed Trinity, which we cannot possibly hope to unravel or explain, and by commanding us to accept them on His authority, or suffer the penalty of eternal death. One who is not a true child of the Church may fret and chafe under the ordeal, and, perhaps, even reject the doctrine altogether, refusing to submit his judgment to the revelations, even of God Himself. If, on the contrary, he be a dutiful subject, he will rejoice at such an occasion of testifying his unbounded trust in God, and, throwing himself on his knees in the dust, will

feel happy in exclaiming with a deep sense of his own nothingness :—

"Thou, O Lord, art all light, and I am all darkness ; Thou art the infinite and uncreated Wisdom, I am but pride and folly. I bow down myself before Thee, and submit readily, cheerfully and without hesitation to Thy teaching. Thou alone art the Lord, Thou alone art God, and there is none like to Thee in heaven or on earth. Thy voice is as sweetest music to my heart, and Thy words are a path to my feet ; speak, for Thy servant heareth."

We cannot honour God more than by trusting Him and confiding in Him, and the more sublime and exalted are the truths He proposes, the more thoroughly do we testify and prove the genuineness of our confidence by believing them.

God may, indeed, try us. He may test our faith as He tested the faith of Abraham ; He may exercise us continually in this fundamental virtue. One thing, however, He cannot do. One thing is impossible even to the Omnipotent Himself : He cannot deceive us ; He cannot mislead us, or draw us into error, for He is the absolute and uncreated Truth. Heaven and earth may pass away, but His word shall *never* pass away.

CHAPTER III.

THOUGHTS ON THE SIMPLICITY OF GOD.

How few persons there are, even among the good and fervent, who love to dwell upon that which, after all, is the grandest and most sublime of all subjects—*viz.*, the nature and attributes of God. Men may think often and devoutly of Jesus Christ ; and Jesus Christ is, of course, God as well as man ; but, even in contemplating Him, they are wont to dwell almost exclusively on the human side of His character. They muse upon His sufferings, humiliations, labours and journeyings ; they weep over His passion, death and burial ; they picture to themselves His gentleness, condescension, patience and love ; but the thought of His Divinity, His awful power, irresistible omnipotence and uncreated wisdom, His mysterious eternity, infinity and inaccessible purity and sanctity, seldom occupies the prominent place in their minds which it assuredly deserves.

In fact, His human nature is so much easier to conceive, and His created soul is so far more intelligible an object, that some persons are really in danger of altogether overlooking the Divine nature which was His from all eternity.

Now, in contemplating God, the very first thought that naturally arises before us is His unity. So soon as we begin to exercise our reason on the

subject, we find ourselves exclaiming "God is one!" One in nature, and, as faith teaches, three in Persons; one in essence, three in relation. The Trinity in God is a subject we shall deal with more fully in a future chapter; but let us now attempt to put down a few thoughts concerning His unity.

God is one in the strictest sense of the word: one intrinsically and in His own nature, as well as one in the sense of being without an equal.

The unity of God, considered in His own nature, we may speak of as the simplicity of God; thereby indicating the contrast that exists between it, on the one hand, and the multiplicity and complexity found in creatures on the other. For, in every being, save in God, there is a greater or less degree of complexity. Thus, man himself is composed of body and soul. The human body is made up of various parts. Each part is distinct. The head is not the hand; the hand is not the foot; the foot is not the arm. So, too, as regards the soul. Though not a material substance—though not possessed of distinct organs or physical parts—still it is by no means simple, in the sense in which God is simple. The soul has various powers and attributes, and they are all distinct. The memory is not the will; the will is not the understanding; the understanding is not the imagination. And none of these is the soul itself. Each is merely a faculty of the soul. We cannot say that the soul *is* reason, or justice, etc. We can say only that the soul *has*, or exercises, reason, justice, etc. They are merely attributes of the soul, and distinct from the soul itself; so there is a real difference between the soul and its faculties and powers, and no strict unity or absolute ontological identity exists between them.

God, on the contrary, is absolutely one and indivisible. It is true that we speak of the attributes of God ; for this we are compelled to do owing to the exigencies of language. But, strictly speaking, God has no attributes in the ordinary sense of that term. We say God is " good." But, to speak of a being as good, is to speak of him possessing a certain quality ; hence, if we wish to be exact, we cannot so speak of God. He does not possess goodness as something added to His essence : He *is* goodness. It is His very being. *Deus simplex, quia, quod habet, hoc est.* So of every other quality, which, by the necessity of human speech, we attribute to Him. He is not wise : He is wisdom. His wisdom is indistinguishable from Himself. The same must be said of His power, patience, sanctity, mercy, providence, and of all else. Such qualities are not *of* God or *in* God : they *are* God, and consequently are not really " qualities " at all. This is why the Scripture does not inform us that God loves or that He has love, but that He is love. *Deus caritas est.*

Yes, " God is love "; and, as He is love, so is He also wisdom, power, omnipotence, beauty, sanctity, and all else ; and yet His wisdom is but another name for His power ; and His power is but another name for His love ; and His love is but another name for His justice ; and His justice but another name for His beauty. In the Deity, goodness, beauty, truth, wisdom, etc., do not exist as distinct attributes ; they are all so many different names for His very essence, according to the different manner in which that essence is conceived and regarded by creatures. These, and the innumerable other terms which we employ, indicate, not an innumerable number of perfections, but an

innumerable number of different aspects of the one infinite and indivisible perfection. The distinction we make between one Divine perfection and another is not a real intrinsic distinction, but an ideal one ; or, as theologians put it, not a *distinctio realis*, but a *distinctio rationis*. We employ different words, not to indicate any objective change on the part of God, but simply to indicate the self-same indivisible and changeless essence of God, as it presents itself, now in one way, now in another, to our limited understandings. In fact, we do very much what we do when speaking of terrestrial things. We speak, for example, of the sun *rising*, and the sun *setting*. There is no real distinction between the setting and the rising sun ; for, strictly speaking, the sun neither rises nor sets. It is the earth alone that is responsible for the phenomena so described. It is the earth, not the sun, that changes its position. This terrestrial movement, however, gives to the sun a different appearance in our eyes ; and, to indicate this difference, we call it by a distinct name. We speak of the altered relation as though it were the sun itself that varied and shifted its position.

Unity, as it exists in God, is so absolute that it admits of no modification or alteration whatsoever. In fact, change is metaphysically impossible, except in a finite being. For what does every change necessarily imply ? Either an addition of some kind, or a privation of some kind. In fact, change cannot be accounted for on any other hypothesis. Take a familiar example. To-day I am beaming with happiness ; to-morrow I am a prey to the most acute sorrow. Why the change ? Perhaps, because news reaches me of the death of a devoted friend—*i.e.*, my knowledge has been increased : or,

again, it may be because I have lost my riches, my reputation, or my health—*i.e.*, something has been withdrawn from me, which before I possessed and enjoyed. And, since every change supposes an accession or a privation, God must be changeless. For He is infinite in every respect; and He who is infinite in every respect cannot receive increase, for what is capable of increase is necessarily limited. So, for a similar reason, neither can the infinite suffer any decrease or privation. For so soon as anything is wanting, the infinite ceases to be infinite; or, in other words, God must cease to be God—which is, of all impossible things, the most impossible.

It may help somewhat to clear our views on this subject if we here remark that even creatures enjoy a certain measure of unity. A man is the same man to-day and yesterday—that is to say, there is the same individual, the same *suppositum;* but still we cannot say that there is actual identity. He may be sometimes in one state and sometimes in another: *e.g.*, at one time discouraged, downcast and in despair; at another, bright, cheery and full of hope. But there is nothing to correspond even to this in God, who knows no change or shadow or alteration, but is ever the infinitely perfect throughout all ages, times and periods. "Yesterday, and to-day, and the same for ever."

Hence all that seems to imply change in the Creator must be understood to mean, in sober truth, nothing more than a change in the creature. What looks like change in God is really the simple and Divine act of omnipotence, changeless in itself, producing change in all things else. We say God loves and hates; that He is angered and pacified; now roused to indignation, now induced

to relent and to pardon ; that He punishes and rewards, etc. And when we hear such things said, and read such expressions in the Bible, we are sometimes apt to forget the calm, consistent and passionless nature of God, " with whom there is no change, nor shadow of alteration " (Jas. i. 17).

In all such cases the change which we attribute to God must really be referred to that which is external to God. In such a matter it is not easy to find an example that may fittingly illustrate our theme ; but let us make an attempt. Take, as an instance, the sun shining in the heavens. The sun casts a ray of heat upon the earth : this ray is precisely the same whether it fall on one object or another. But, observe, though there may be no difference in the *ray* itself, the *effect* of that ray may be not only different, but even opposite, according to the condition, quality and character of the object on which it falls. If it fall on a piece of wax it will soften it and make it perfectly plastic and yielding ; but if it fall on a piece of soft wet clay it will produce diametrically the opposite effect. It will harden and bake it till it breaks up and crumbles away into dust. So God, more incapable of all change than the sun's rays, by one and the same act produces the most opposite results—*e.g.*, rewards the saint and punishes the sinner.

Take another example from the order of nature. What are more dissimilar than mid-winter and mid-summer ? Yet the contrast arises, not as most people would suppose, from any difference in the rays of heat falling from the sun, but solely from the difference in the angle at which the earth presents itself to those rays. If we study the seasons, for instance, in the northern hemisphere, we shall find that the earth is no nearer the sun in the heats

of summer than in the frosts of winter; on the contrary, it is appreciably farther off; the difference of the seasons being due to the greater or less inclination of the earth's axis to the ecliptic, or plane in which the earth revolves around the sun. When the earth assumes a position so that the rays fall almost perpendicularly we experience the heat of summer; when it assumes a position so that these same rays fall at an acute angle we have the piercing cold of winter. The ray, so to speak, is immutable, and the wholly opposite effects observable are owing, not to any alteration in the sun, but to an alteration on the part of the earth. The sun—a figure of God—undergoes no corresponding alteration; yet, though this great source of heat rests unaffected, the earth will enjoy summer or endure winter according to the manner in which it presents itself to the sun's glance.

These may be taken as imperfect similitudes of God's action upon different creatures. The changelessness of the ray suggests the immutability and simplicity existing on the part of God; its different effects upon different objects suggest the mutability and the varied conditions existing on the part of creatures. God is said to love one soul, and to reward it with the imperishable joys of heaven; He is said to hate another, and to pour out His wrath upon it, and to thrust it into the eternal fires of hell—and, of course, God does really detest sin and love virtue. Yet the one act and the other, though totally different so far as their effects on the two souls are concerned, are absolutely one and the same in God—and can bear no evidence of any mutability in the immutable. His act is one and the same, for the simple reason that it is Himself: He *is* His act—"actus puris-

simus." Yet the self-same act will produce different and even opposite effects upon unlike objects, or upon the same object in different conditions. To illustrate this yet more fully let us make use of an analogy. Instead of the soul (1) made for God, (2) made to enjoy God, and (3) to bask in the brightness of His presence, let us take the human eye (1) made for light, (2) made to enjoy light, and (3) to bask in the brightness of its presence.

Now, a healthy eye, an eye which is sound and perfect, rejoices in the light. The presence of the light is a source of perennial contentment and satisfaction to it. But, suppose a change to come over this delicate organ ; suppose the eye to be diseased, inflamed, injured ; then, what was before a source of pleasure is changed into a source of pain, annoyance, irritation and suffering. The sore, blood-shot organ now shuns the light ; its brightness becomes insupportable ; the only escape from pain is in darkness. The blinds are drawn, and the shutters closed, and the rays of the sun are not allowed to fall upon the dilated pupil. Whence this difference ? It is not to be found in the light itself, but in the altered state of the eye. The light is ever the same—ever pure, clear, cheery, bright, glorious ; but the eye, because diseased, *because fallen from its perfect state*, now finds that to be intolerable which once was its delight, now experiences pain where it once found pleasure.

So is it, in so far as a similitude can be applied, with the soul rejoicing in heaven, and the soul tortured in hell. By the self-same act God rewards the good and punishes the bad. It is not God who has changed, it is the soul. Let us put it in another way : God is not merely good, He is infinite goodness ; to the good infinite goodness

will be in harmony, but goodness will never harmonise with evil. It will be in opposition with it; and if it is eternal goodness it will be in eternal opposition; and if infinite goodness it will be in infinite opposition. Thus it is the very goodness of God (this self-same immutable attribute) which, without any shadow of change, constitutes at once the heaven of the saint and the hell of the sinner. Men talk as though God had changed towards them; but it is they who have changed towards Him—in a word, it is not the light that has lost its brightness and withholds its cheering rays, it is the disease the eye has contracted which has made the presence of the self-same rays, once so delightful and joy-giving, now so agonising and intolerable.

So with regard to every Divine act *ad extra.* God seems to act differently at different times, and differently towards different persons and objects at the same time; yet faith assures us that on the part of God there is no change whatsoever, and that His state being one of infinite perfection cannot suffer the slightest alteration. To alter would be to grow less perfect; for, being already infinite in all perfection, He cannot alter in the direction of *greater* perfection; if He alter at all, it must be in the direction of *less* perfection—which is absolutely impossible with God. "Ego Dominus et non mutor": "I am the Lord, and I change not" (Mal. iii. 6).

When God therefore *appears* to act in an infinite variety of ways it is in reality but the one infinitely perfect act, in itself absolutely simple, which is producing innumerable different effects and manifesting itself in an infinite variety of forms.

Let us, in illustration, refer once again to the

sunlight. The rays of the sun are (practically) ever the same, but see how differently they affect the different objects on which they fall; *e.g.*, (*a*) we watch them fall on the ocean, and we see the waters rising by evaporation till the arching heavens are filled with clouds; (*b*) or, again, we watch them fall on the snow-capped mountains, and behold! the ice and snow melt, and the torrents are let loose, and bound down their rugged rocky beds and over the gigantic cliffs on their way to the sea with the sound of thunder; (*c*) or we see them shining upon the broad stretching plains and valleys, and at once stirring the fresh-sown seed and awakening it into life till the blades of grass appear and the soft velvety verdure spreads itself like a carpet over the land; (*d*) or they fall on the bare corn-fields and (*e*) the leafless vineyards, and in a few months the sunlit earth smiles in golden harvests, and glows with the innumerable clusters of purple grapes.

It is the same sun, the same rays; yet how varied are the effects, according to circumstances of place, of time, and of distance! Or, to descend into minuter particulars: All colour on earth is due to the action of the sun. It is the one sun that (*f*) paints the lily, that (*g*) gilds the pistils in its chalice-cup till they look like points of burnished gold, that (*h*) lends to the heather-bell its fairy-like hues, and (*i*) makes the hawberries glow like fire in the autumn hedgerows. A single ray falls like a pure white arrow from the eastern sky, yet, seen through a prism, it seems to the observer wholly transformed and aglow with all the colours of the solar spectrum. It is red and orange, purple and violet, blue, green and gold, and changes like a witch's oils.

Throughout all these variations the ray remains unaffected. It is the same sun, the same light, the same strange power, that, falling upon different bodies, exhibits itself in such an endless variety of ways. Men ask, in their ignorance, why God changes His attitude now towards one and now towards another. But with as much reason they might ask why the sun changes its attitude towards the soft damp clay, which it hardens and pulverises, and towards the hard wax, which it softens and melts like water. As well ask why the sun paints the lily white, the rose red, and the violet purple; or why it leaves the dry dead twig unadorned, while it clothes the lily of the field in a wealth of glory and splendour unknown to Solomon in the zenith of his power. The difference is not to be sought in the sun, but in the objects with which the sun is called upon to deal. It would be manifestly absurd to say that the sun shows partiality, or that it is differently affected towards different objects. No, the sun is the same; the source of the difference is not attributable to the glorious orb of day, but to the unlike condition of terrestrial things.

This, though necessarily an imperfect and unsatisfying illustration, is yet the best we can offer, and may help in some measure to enable us to conceive at least *what is meant* by the immutable unity of God within Himself, throughout all the changes and vicissitudes that are the result of His action upon creatures.

But if God is one in His own nature, one in the sense of being free from all complexity and multiplicity of parts and attributes and faculties—*i.e.*, the essentially simple—He is, of course, equally one in the more ordinary sense—that is to say, in

worm's spark as compared with the brilliance of the noon-day's sun—and not merely less, but infinitely less. Here, surely, is food enough for a life's reflection!

Unhappily men do not think enough of the grandeur and incomparable splendour of Him who rules the world: if they did, not only would they dare not offend Him as they do, but they would rather love to lose themselves in the thought of Him and of His marvellous attributes. The pettiness of earthly gains, the poor tawdry rewards offered by the world, the hollowness and emptiness of transitory things, the foolish ambition and vain struggles for worldly honours, dignities, wealth, etc., would excite nothing but disdain, and man's one ambition and aim would be to secure possession of the infinite and the incomparable.

It would be impossible in the space at our disposal to dwell upon all the attributes into which, for the sake of clearness, we are accustomed to divide the indivisible perfection of God. But let us take one as an example of all the rest.

The omnipotence of God. God is not merely omnipotent: He is Omnipotence itself. He is omnipotence just as He is charity, or wisdom, or sanctity: it is His very nature. His power is not acquired, as the power of an angel: it is His very being; nor is it dependent on another, as the power of a creature depends on its Creator: it is self-existent. His power is not circumscribed as the power of other beings is: it is without bound, or limit, or restriction. It is absolutely infinite. To the most powerful creatures some acts are more difficult than others; but with God there can be no "more or less" difficulty, because there is no difficulty whatsoever. To create a grain of dust

or to create and people and govern a thousand worlds is equally easy to Him who can do all things by a word ; to lay the glistening dew-drop in the flower-cup or to fashion the fathomless sea and all it contains is equally easy to God. Difficulty is a word which has no meaning when applied to omnipotence.

He has given us some slight glimpse of His might in the visible creation. The earth on which we dwell reveals to us something of His power. The sun, shining down upon us from a distance of over 90,000,000 miles, and which is over a million times the bulk of our earth, tells us a little more ; still more are we penetrated with a sense of God's power when we contemplate other planets, compared to which the sun itself is but a puny insignificant object—such as Sirius, which is calculated to be a thousand times vaster than the sun, and a million times farther off—and our knowledge will grow yet further as we advance to the consideration of those stars, so far distant that their light, though travelling 180,000 miles in one second, yet takes years to reach us ; and which (though they are really vaster than the whole world) appear but as microscopic grains of untold splendour.

Yet, immense as the universe is, its creation and preservation do not exhaust the power of God ; He might, did He so please, call into being a universe so vast that the present universe would only compare with it as a grain of dust to a mountain ; and then a third universe bearing the same proportion to the second, as the second to the first ; and so on indefinitely, and for ever. We lose ourselves in the effort to conceive it—and yet He would not exhaust His power or in any way strain

it. And what we have said of size we might also say of beauty—the present beauty of creation might be doubled, and the result doubled again, and so on throughout endless ages, with a result that no imagination can picture.

But nothing can really represent to our minds the magnitude of His power. All creation babbles of it. Every object on which the eye rests points to it. But it is after all but the merest babbling, but the merest pointing. We may learn more and more of it, but an infinite distance must ever separate us from its full realisation. To understand an infinite object supposes an infinite capacity; but the power of God is infinite; therefore, to the extent in which our minds fall short of infinitude, to the same extent must they ever fall short of realising the power of God. In fact, the created intelligence of man or angel is not merely *far* from understanding—not merely an *immeasurable way off* understanding it, but an INFINITE way off understanding it. Yet this is the Being we set at defiance when we sin.

And what we say of His power is true of every attribute and Divine perfection. Even in heaven itself, even when illuminated by the supernatural light of eternal glory, we shall not be able to fully understand or to adequately realise the infinite perfections of God. In fact, the higher a saint is in glory, and the more exalted he is in perfection, the more fully and completely he will understand how absolutely and essentially incomprehensible God is.

Indeed, God is not incomprehensible to man only, but to *every created intelligence*, and not merely while existing in the order of nature, but even if raised to the order of grace and glory.

Theologians teach not merely that no created mind can fully and adequately comprehend God, but that God could not even communicate such a power of comprehension, for the same reason that He could not create an infinite being or place any mere creature on a perfect level with Himself—which would involve a contradiction.

We shall know more of God than will satisfy us, when we get into His kingdom. Nay, we shall comprehend enough to intoxicate us with a happiness and a joy which no words can express: but we shall never, never exhaust His beauty, wisdom and magnificence, etc. His infinite perfections will ever outstrip the utmost efforts of our finite minds; and our limited capacities will never be able to encompass His Divine nature or to comprehend it adequately; will never be able, that is to say, to know Him as He knows Himself. If we could do that, we should be not human, but Divine; not finite, but infinite.

Such, then, is the unity and unparalleled excellence of Him whom we adore. We have said enough to show that He is one without a rival, without a second to dispute His sovereignty; alone in the infinitude of His matchless nature. Hence the Church sings every day in the Mass: "Tu solus sanctus; Tu solus Dominus; Tu solus altissimus": "Thou *alone* art holy; Thou alone art the Lord; Thou alone art the Most High."

The thought of the unrivalled majesty and omnipotence of God is most salutary. Indeed it is by musing upon such themes that we come to realise—(1) our own nothingness and insufficiency; (2) the enormity of any sin committed against the Divine Majesty; and (3) the immeasurably greater value of the least act done for His sake than the

greatest achievement performed under any other impulse.

To think seriously of the unapproachable magnificence and glory of God is, indeed, to set one's very heart on fire with an insatiable longing to see the King in all His beauty and unveiled splendour.

In contemplating the life in heaven, people are too apt to set before their minds the delights of sense, the sights, the society, the heavenly music, the clarity, the agility, and the grace and perfection of outward form and colour. But all these joys, however true and intense they may be—and even they are, no doubt, intense beyond words—sink into insignificance when we come to think of the Giver. They bear no proportion to the ecstasy of delight arising from His presence. Who shall picture it? Who describe it? When we have used up every comparison, and exhausted all language, and wearied our minds in our effort to image forth some feeble reflection of His beauty, we are as far off as when we began, and, like St. Jeremias, must exclaim: "A. A. Domine, nescio loqui; puer sum!" We can only say that it is unique, unparalleled, infinite and uncreated; we know not what it is now. But, in the words of inspired wisdom, "we shall be *satisfied* when His beauty shall appear."

CHAPTER IV.

THOUGHTS ON THE WISDOM OF GOD.

"God is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, neither is there any creature invisible in His sight; but all things are naked and open to His eyes." (Heb. iv. 12, 13.)

If the immensity of the sideral universe and the prodigious scale of the visible creation reveal to us something of the infinite power of God, so, in like manner, the perfect order observable throughout space and the beautiful harmony everywhere prevailing and everywhere even conspicuous, speak to us no less eloquently of His inscrutable wisdom. Every creature, from the greatest down to the least, bears testimony to the presence of an All-Wise as well as of an All-Powerful Ruler. Whether, with the astronomer, we contemplate the intricate motions of the heavenly bodies, through the limitless realms of space, or whether, with the physician, we consider the motions of the tiny corpuscules in the blood as they are carried along through every part of our wonderful system to build up muscle, and bone, and tissue, we shall be equally struck by the most unequivocal signs of a Divine intelligence.

Consider for a moment the heavens above. Through their ample expanse unnumbered worlds are perpetually revolving. Herschel himself counted

over twenty millions in the Milky Way alone. These worlds are not only innumerable, but they are thousands of times, and in the case of many, hundreds of thousands, and even millions of times, vaster than our entire earth. Yet they are perpetually rushing through space with terrific rapidity. Each has its appointed path through the heavens ; each dashes by, at a lightning-like speed, along the orbit marked out for it. While generations of men come and go, while nations rise and fall, these colossal worlds are ever hastening on their way, some at the rate of one thousand miles a minute, some at the rate of ten thousand miles and even much more. Yet, observe, they never collide, never swerve to right or left, but follow their proper orbit with such regularity and such precision and accuracy, that astronomers are able to predict to a nicety, to within a line, or even a fraction of a line, the spot in the heavens where they may be found fifty or a hundred years hence.

What an exhibition of Divine wisdom is here ! Truly does the Psalmist remind us that " The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hands " (Ps. xviii.). But if we descend to earth, and contemplate the most diminutive object reposing upon its surface, the same truth is equally evident. The smallest wild flower that grows in the hedgerows is equally loud and clear in its testimony to ears that are properly attuned. Even the wild rose or the timorous violet comes before us as a perfect work of art, the product of wisdom as well as of power. Nothing but infinite wisdom could impress upon a dull particle of unconscious matter —such as the seed of a flower—those marvellous principles of force and hidden virtue which enable

it to build up and construct such beauteous forms from the elements of earth, air, water ; to paint them with such fairy hues, to gild their petals till they gleam as fragments of burnished gold, and to fill their chalice-cups with a sweetness and a fragrance that scents every passing breeze. Indeed, there is nothing throughout nature that does not whisper to us of God's intelligence and wisdom. As every shell murmurs of the great sea from which it came, so every creature murmurs of the great Creator who fashioned and formed it.

In our own soul, however, we possess a more irresistible proof of God's wisdom. Our soul is intelligent, and possesses reason and the gift of judgment. Now, as no one can give what he does not possess, God could not create intelligence unless He first possessed it in an infinite degree. The royal prophet, arguing against those who would deny the personality of God, asks very pertinently : " He that planted the ear, shall He not hear ? and He that formed the eye, shall He not consider ?" (Ps. xciii. 9). So in a similar temper may we inquire : He that has bestowed intelligence, shall He not understand ? and He that has created reason, shall He not comprehend ? Evidently, if reason and intelligence exist anywhere in creation, that very fact proves incontestably that they exist in the mind of the infinite Creator.

The Holy Scriptures again and again proclaim the omniscience of God. In Ecclus. (xxiii. 28) we read : " The eyes of the Lord are far brighter than the sun : beholding round about all the ways of men, and the bottom of the deep, and looking into the hearts of men, into the most hidden parts." So, again, similar passages are to be met with in

the Psalms—*e.g.*, cxxxviii. : "Thou hast known my sitting down, and my rising up ; Thou hast understood my thoughts afar off : my path and my line Thou hast searched out, and Thou hast foreseen all my ways." So in Ecclus. (xxxix. 24) : "The works of all flesh are before Him, and there is nothing hidden from His eyes. He seeth from eternity to eternity, and there is nothing wonderful before Him." Such quotations might be multiplied almost without limit.

Let us now enter a little more into particulars. Reason and faith teach us that the wisdom of God is infinite. If infinite, it must have an infinite object. Such an object cannot, of course, be found among creatures which are essentially and necessarily limited. The only adequate object of God's knowledge and contemplation is God Himself. He knows Himself fully and exhaustively, and in a manner in which no creature knows or can ever know Him. Now observe : as every other being has sprung from Him, and is the fruit and result of His industry, it follows that in knowing Himself He knows all else besides. Let me attempt an illustration. Thus, if I could know an acorn perfectly : if I could measure all its vital forces, and gauge all its hidden sources of energy and growth, I should then be able to understand an oak-tree without ever having seen one. So, only in a transcendental manner, God understanding Himself, by the same act understands, and knows all things else, all being but the effect of His power : for "all things," as St. John says, "were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made."

Perhaps we may realise this better by aid of a comparison. Take as an example some renowned

painter. We steal softly into his studio : it is a Raphael, or a Rubens, or a Dominichino. We find him seated there lost in reverie, his head leaning meditatively on his hand. He is awaiting the inspiration before he can commence his work. Around him lie his pigments, his brushes, his pallet and oils, and washes, and the untouched canvas. What is his purpose ? He is about to paint an ideal figure or scene—that is to say, he is going to take the image existing in his own mind, and transfer it to the canvas. The scene or figure must, therefore, be in his own mind, and stand out clearly before him ere he can give it an external and independent existence. It must exist within, before it is possible for it to exist without, in actual colour and form. In a word, the image must be already on his imagination ere he can give it any outward expression or external reality—*i.e.*, it must be known to the artist before the artist can by aid of colour and form make it known to others.

So is it, only in an infinitely higher degree, of the Divine Artist, the Artist who has painted the heavens and beautified the earth. He must have known all things, even before He made them ; for He could not create till He knew, and had already determined what it was He was about to create. It was absolutely necessary that the idea, the pattern or prototype should exist within the mind of God before He could decree that it should have a real objective existence.

And here we may point out the fundamental distinction between the wisdom of man, such as it is, and the wisdom of God. With us a thing must exist in order that we may know it ; with God it is precisely the opposite. The thing must be

known in order that it may exist. If it did not first exist, we could never know it; but if God did not first know it, it could never exist. In other words, our knowledge supposes the object already existing; on the other hand, the existence of any object necessarily supposes a preceding knowledge of it already in the mind of God. If any creature exists, then God must have known it before it existed, since otherwise its existence would be an impossibility.

From this it follows that God's knowledge must be co-extensive with creation—*i.e.*, it must extend to every existing creature, the greatest and the smallest alike, and even to every merely possible creature likewise; for unless known to Him they could not be properly described as even "possible."

Although *we* are unable to occupy our minds with many things at the same time; though a vast multitude of distinct objects breed confusion with us, yet we must bear in mind that this fact is owing simply to our finite nature. This confusion is not a necessary condition of mind inasmuch as it is *mind;* but it is a necessary condition of mind *inasmuch as it is created, finite, and circumscribed.* It is a mere imperfection and limitation, and therefore in no way holds in respect to an infinite Mind.

God knows all truths without obscurity or confusion, and each individually as though no others existed—each as all, and all as each. What an overwhelming thought is this! Call to mind the myriads of creatures that swarm in the forests and fields, the seas and rivers, the earth and the air. Yet not a motion of the least among them, not a sensation, not a breath or a throb, not the beat of a heart, not the glance of an eye, not the tremor

of a wing escapes Him. From the highest seraph in heaven down to the invisible amœba, everything is "naked and open to His eyes." I stoop and dip my finger in a stagnant pool, and withdraw it with one small drop adhering to the tip. It is but a tiny drop. I place it beneath a powerful microscope. And behold! the drop is transformed. It has grown into a veritable ocean—a world!—a universe![1] What seemed so clear, and still, and void, is found to be teeming with life. Thousands, nay, hundreds of thousands, of strange and uncanny forms are plunging and swimming, and hurrying to and fro, and backwards and forwards, and up and down, in this little water world. There are pursuers and pursued, devourers and devoured; there are great and small, the strong and the weak; there are births and deaths, and thrills of joy and throbs of pain, in that strange water world. Yet there is no birth and no death, no thrill of joy or throb of pain even there—in that little universe glistening like a diamond at the end of my finger—but God knows it, and permits it, and ordains it. For His providence watches over all, and without His foreknowledge nothing either stirs, breathes, or even exists, or can exist, and if this be true of *one* drop, what of the accumulation of all drops throughout creation!

[1] "Infusoria-animalcules. The great entomologist, Ehrenberg, has ascertained that the Infusoria, which have hitherto been considered as scarcely organised, have an internal structure resembling that of the higher animals —viz., muscles, intestines, eyes, nerves, and organs of reproduction. . . . Their powers of reproduction are so great, that from one individual a million were produced in ten days; on the eleventh, twelve millions; and on the twelfth day, sixteen millions."—*Dict. of Scient. Terms.*

"O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways!" (Rom. xi. 33.) Yes! unfathomable indeed, and unsearchable to the minds of men. That all, down to, and including, the invisible infusoria, should be clearly known to Him and known to Him individually, is indeed marvellous. But it is an incontestable truth. We may easily convince ourselves of this by pointing out the absurdity of the opposite hypothesis.

We will, then, suppose, for the sake of argument, that among the countless myriads of creatures one single individual exists of which God knows nothing. Observe the absurd consequences that would follow:—

I. It would follow that God is not everywhere. For if He were everywhere He would be where that creature is, and would, of course, know of it. To say, therefore, that there is any creature unknown to God would be to deny His immensity and ubiquity.

II. It would follow that the dominion of God is not infinite. For if the creature we are referring to were dependent upon God, and supported each succeeding moment by the power of God, it must be known to Him. If it be not known to Him, then it must be independent of God, self-existing and its own master, which is absurd.

III. Further, to say that any being, however contemptible, is unknown to God, is the same thing as to deny His omniscience. His knowledge would not be infinite, because it might be added to: we could add the fact of this creature's existence.

What we have laid down in regard to every

creature holds equally good, of course, of every portion and element of which even the least creature is made up.

But the thought of the wisdom of God, though well calculated to fill our minds with reverence and awe, becomes especially pertinent and practical when referred to ourselves in person. Indeed, it is a great aid to sanctity and perfection to try to realise God's intimate consciousness of all that goes on, even in our most secret heart of hearts, and to feel God knows us intimately, clearly, fully, exhaustively. Heart and mind are naked and open before Him. I may forget Him : He cannot forget me. My thoughts fly by so rapidly that they almost escape me : they cannot escape Him. God's all-penetrating eye follows me wheresoever I may be. Nothing could give God a clearer or a more thorough knowledge of me than He has already.

He knows me at this moment with absolute perfection and accuracy—my thoughts, my desires, my secret aspirations. Indeed, as compared with God, I am grossly ignorant of myself. I see, but cannot explain sight. I am ignorant of how I see. I cannot understand the process. I feel, but sensation remains an insoluble mystery to me ; and so of the other senses. Yet how perfectly He knows who has designed and constructed all ! But more : He knows me so intimately that even my future is before Him as distinctly as my present. As he told St. Peter of his threefold sin of denial before he committed it—nay, when he declared and swore that he would rather suffer death than commit it—so could He tell me about every act and event of my future life : what I shall be thinking of, and doing, and desiring to do, each

succeeding moment ; not in this world alone, but in the next world also, a thousand, a million, a billion centuries hence ; yea, for all eternity. Not only will He know them in the future as they occur, but He knows them now. He knew them an eternity before I was created !

This is not all. He is fully informed not only of what I shall do and think during the endless future that awaits me beyond the grave, but He is equally fully informed as to what I would do under every imaginable and unimaginable circumstance and under every possible hypothesis.

There must be, of course, an infinite number of circumstances in which I shall never really be placed, and millions upon millions of trials and temptations to which I shall never be subject ; yet God knows exactly and accurately what I would do, and how I would conduct myself, were I so circumstanced, and were I so tried and tempted. And what, by way of example, I have said of myself, is true of each of the unnumbered host of angels and the countless generations of men, whether already created or yet to be created.

Nor does His knowledge end here. With equal perspicacity and exactness God knows not only every creature that now exists, or that one day will exist, but likewise the vastly larger number of merely possible creatures—*i.e.*, creatures which He might, but never will, create.

But we might go on for ever developing and extending the range of the infinite wisdom of God in its incomprehensible grandeur and perfection. Let us rather employ the space that remains in striving to draw some practical lessons.

The first effect of the consideration of God's wisdom is to enhance our reverence and esteem

of Him, and to fill our minds with a deeper sense of His immensity, His majesty and unapproachable excellence, and His infinite supremacy over all the works of His hands.

The second effect should be to produce in us a sense of the most profound humility and perfect unquestioning submission to His authority, and a ready, vivid faith in whatsoever He reveals ; for what is the wisdom and knowledge of all men and angels combined compared to the wisdom and knowledge of God ? As a grain of sand to a mountain ; as a drop to the ocean ; as the glow-worm's feeble spark to the midday splendour of the tropical sun.

A third effect is to fill the soul with a certain interior joy and gladness, peace and tranquillity. These effects will arise from the thought of God's nearness. In the hour of trial, in the day of gloom and mourning, I will remember (and be comforted by the remembrance) that God knows my trials and my sorrows, and has weighed all my temptations and difficulties ; that He is a witness both of my afflictions and of my patience and resignation under them. I shall take comfort from the thought that I may address myself to Him at any time, and He will hear me ; that I may speak with Him familiarly and frankly by day or night "as a friend speaketh to a friend," without fear of being repulsed or misunderstood or chided.

The great misfortune nowadays is that for so many men God has ceased to be a reality. Even those who believe in God's existence do so only in an abstract and unreal manner. God does not enter into their very life ; the thought of Him is very seldom before them : they wholly fail to realise the awful presence of Omnipotence and

Omniscience. Oh, what a terrible awakening there will be some day!

Many marvellous surprises, no doubt, await us at the hour of our death; but, when we open our eyes for the first time in another world, will there be any surprise equal to that which we shall experience when we first learn how close and intimate God has been to us all our lives long? Let us resolve to think more frequently of the all-seeing and all-penetrating eye of God, and the absolute perfection with which He reads our most secret thoughts, and we shall soon grow in holiness and sanctity. It is the method prescribed by God Himself: "Walk before Me, and be perfect" (Gen. xvii. 1).

CHAPTER V.

THE BLESSED TRINITY REFLECTED IN MAN.

EVERY Catholic believes in the adorable mystery of the Blessed Trinity—that is to say, he professes his unqualified adhesion to the doctrine that there is but one God, and that in this one God there are three distinct Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The Father is truly God. The Son is truly God. The Holy Ghost is truly God. Yet there is only one God. The Father is not the Son. The Son is not the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is neither the Father nor the Son. Yet each possesses the same indivisible nature.

This is a mystery. It is above and beyond the uttermost reach of our limited capacities. Nor should this be a matter of surprise, since all our powers, both intellectual and sensitive, are circumscribed.

We can hear, but only within a certain distance; the farther off is the sound, the fainter and feebler it grows, till at last it becomes absolutely inaudible. Yet, we do not deny the existence of sounds because they transcend our power of hearing. Who, while sailing over some broad expanse of water, has not noticed on the distant shore the intermittent puffs of filmy white steam ejected by some hurrying engine? We catch occasional

glimpses of the train as it dashes through the rocky cutting, or over the iron bridge. Our ears can hear no sound at such a distance. We listen attentively, but our sense of hearing gives no report. The flies buzzing about our head are less inaudible. Yet we know, as a matter of fact, that the great powerful engine is rushing along with a tremendous rattle and clatter over the metal bridges, and clanging and booming like thunder as it goes, only we have not a sense acute enough to detect it at such a distance.

So it is with regard to sight. We see, but only within narrow limits and under restrictive conditions. We can gaze upon the distant mountain, but we cannot see a vestige of the town or village nestling in the valley on the opposite side, because vision depends upon light, and light travels only in straight lines ; or, again, we rivet our gaze upon a drop of stagnant water, and can detect no impurities in it ; while, in sober truth, it may be the home and happy hunting-ground of, not merely hundreds, but of millions of living and moving infusoria and animalcula. It is true that it is impossible for us to see the village in the valley, and the animalcula in the raindrop, yet it would be most unreasonable to deny either the one or the other solely because, with all our pains, we fail to detect their presence. Once we confess our hearing and our eyesight to be limited, we are compelled to admit that there may be an innumerable number of objects existing which we have never heard or seen, and of the nature of which we have no suspicion.

Now what is true of the corporeal eye is equally true of the mind's eye. We possess intellect. It is a great gift of God, but its capacity falls far

short of infinitude. Like the bodily eye, it is limited, and can range only within a certain distance. It has its own well-defined horizon, beyond which it cannot trespass. We can understand many things ; but of an infinitely larger number of things we know absolutely nothing. The nature and attributes of God, for example, no created intelligence can ever hope fully to fathom. To deny their truth, however, because our minds cannot fathom it, is as foolish as to deny the sounds that we cannot hear, or the sights that we cannot see.

Though the mystery of the Blessed Trinity is, as we have already remarked, above reason, it is not contrary to reason. For, observe, we are not taught that three Gods are but one God, nor that one Person is three Persons, but that three Persons are but one God.

But if Father, Son and Holy Ghost are all one and the same God, how are we to distinguish between them ? How shall we know one from another when all are essentially one and the same substance ? If the one is and has all that the other is and has, how comes it that one is not the other ? We answer : the Father is not the Son, because He gave birth to another, but is not born Himself. The Son is not the Father, because, though He Himself is born, He gives birth to no other. The Holy Ghost is distinct from the Father, for He does not give birth to a Son ; and He is distinct from the Son because He is not *born* of the Father, but *proceeds* from the Father and the Son. He has no Son, so He is not the Father. He has no Father, so He is not the Son. He is produced by both Father and Son, therefore He is distinct from the one and the other ; for that

which is produced is distinct (at least so far as relation is concerned) from that which produces.

Let us now come to the purpose of this chapter, and speak of the reflection of this stupendous mystery in the person of man.

Though nothing in creation can ever explain the inexplicable, or clear away the mystery of the being of God, yet it pleased His Divine Majesty to leave traces of His triune nature even on creatures ; and if on all creatures, then especially on man. In the very opening chapter of Genesis it is narrated that God said : " Let Us make man to Our own image and likeness." " Let *Us* ": by the plural form " Us " is indicated the plurality of Divine Persons. By the singular form " image " and " likeness " (not " images " and " likenesses ") is indicated the unity of the Divine nature. So also " *Our* image " is the expression used, and not " *My* image," to show the plurality of the Persons ; and " Our *image*," and not " Our *images*," to show the unity of essence.

The English catechism asks : " Is this image in your body or in your soul ?" and the child is made to answer : " This likeness is *chiefly* in my soul "; by which it would seem to imply that it exists, at least in some measure, also in the body. Let us consider this resemblance first, as being the least important.

Recalling to mind the history of man's creation in the Garden of Paradise, we find that God (1) first created Adam. Adam, consequently, possessed neither father nor mother, and existed without any human predecessor. In this respect he resembled the Eternal Father ; the First Person of the Blessed Trinity, who is born of none, and proceeds from none. When Adam had been

created (2) God then proceeded to create the second person of the human family—*i.e.*, Eve. But He did not fashion her in the same manner as He fashioned Adam—that is to say, directly from *the slime* of the earth. He formed her out of Adam. " The Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam, and, when he was fast asleep, He took one of his ribs and filled up flesh for it. And the Lord God built the rib which He took from Adam into a woman " (Gen. ii. 21, 22). And Adam, seeing her, recognised whence she had come, and, addressing her, exclaimed : " This now is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh."

In the person of Eve we have an image and likeness of the Eternal Son. As the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity is born from the First Divine Person, and from no other, so the second person of the human family, Eve, is born from the first human person, and from no other—*i.e.*, Eve is made from Adam. And (3) when God imposed upon Adam and Eve the command to increase and multiply and fill the earth, He at the same time gave them power to engender and bring forth children, but only conjointly and by their united action. Hence we read in the fourth chapter that Cain was born, and then Abel and others. Now, the children, the fruit of the first marriage instituted and blessed by God, are a figure or image of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. As they were the descendants not of Adam alone, nor of Eve alone, but of both Adam and Eve, they image forth the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from both the Father and the Son. So, again, just as Adam and Eve and their offspring were all of the same human race and of the same nature, so this unity

of nature is at once seen to be a reflection—a very imperfect one, it is true, but yet a reflection—of the unity of nature in the Three Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity. This was a very special way of introducing the human family into being, and must have been wholly exceptional, since we nowhere read of God adopting any similar system in regard to the lower order of creatures, so that it was evidently intended to convey a special meaning.

The image of the Trinity, thus dimly reflected even in the bodily relations of the race, grows stronger and more clearly defined as we leave the material and rise to the contemplation of the spiritual side of man's nature—*i.e.*, his immortal soul. In point of fact, the image and likeness of God is chiefly in the soul. This likeness has been variously explained and elucidated by different authorities. We will express and simplify, so far as possible, in our own words, the explanation which seems to us the most natural and obvious, which we take to be that of St. Augustine.[1]

The soul of a man is a simple spiritual substance, and, inasmuch as it is free from all material parts or organs, it is a most fitting and beautiful image of the Divine unity of God's nature. But while it resembles the unity of God when considered under one aspect, under another aspect it also suggests and represents the Trinity of God. Thus :—

A. *Resemblance to the Father.*—In every human soul we find existence, knowledge, and love. The very first thing that we can so much as conceive regarding the soul is that it exists. The soul, unlike the body, is not born of the substance of the

[1] See *De Civitate Dei.*

parent, but owes its existence directly and exclusively to God. So far, therefore, as its relation to its own species—*i.e.*, to man—is concerned, it comes from none. It is without father or mother. It thus resembles the Eternal Father, who receives His substance from no other.

B. *Resemblance to the Son.*—The soul, however, not merely exists, as the earth and sea exist, but it is aware of its existence, and is conscious of its own being. That is to say, *existence gives birth to self-knowledge.* Hence we have the single and indivisible soul in two different and perfectly distinct relations—*viz.*, the soul knowing, and the soul known ; the soul contemplating, and the soul contemplated ; the soul as subject, and the soul as object. The self-knowledge which springs forth, or is generated from its existence, is a figure of the Second Divine Person, who is born, or springs forth, or is generated from the Father. And further : as in the Blessed Trinity the Father is God, and the Son is God, and yet there are not two Gods, so in man, that which contemplates is the soul, and that which is contemplated is the soul ; yet there are not two souls, but one only soul, which is at once the subject knowing and the object known.

C. *Resemblance to the Holy Ghost.*—But this is not all. The soul not merely exists, nor does it merely know that it exists ; for this very knowledge in its turn gives rise to love. It knows itself, and at once it is drawn to love what it knows. This love, which proceeds from the existing soul contemplating its own existence, is a figure or image of the Holy Ghost. Take a concrete example. A man contemplates himself ; as a consequence of this contemplation he knows

himself, and this knowledge breeds within him a love of himself.

What contemplates ? The soul.

What is the object contemplated ? The soul.

What is that which loves ? The soul.

Then, are there three souls ? No ; they are all one and the same soul. Although existence is not the same thing as knowledge, and though knowledge is not the same thing as love, yet it is the very self-same, indivisible soul that (1) exists, that (2) knows, and that (3) loves. So that there are not three souls, but one only. Here, then, we have a distinction of relation, and yet a unity of nature, within the soul of every man, whereby we may trace, however dimly, the image of the Trinity in ourselves.

And observe, there is not only this threefold distinction in the soul, reflecting the Three Divine Persons of the Trinity, but, what is perhaps still more remarkable, there is also a reflection of their mutual relations and interdependence. The Father does not spring from the Son, but the Son from the Father. So in the soul ; existence does not spring from knowledge, but knowledge from existence : I must exist *before* I can possibly know myself. So, again, if I existed—and, like a tree or a rock, did not know that I existed—I could not elicit an act of love. The love of myself is dependent upon two conditions : I must, *firstly*, exist, and I must, *secondly*, know that I exist before I can by any possibility experience the sensation of love. This third act, therefore, like the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, proceeds from the First and Second, and not from either, if taken singly.

If we now pass on to the consideration of human

action, *ad extra*, we may trace the image of the Blessed Trinity a step farther. Theologians teach that whatsoever exists in creation is the work of the Three Divine Persons, and that every action of Almighty God upon the world of matter or of spirit is an effect of the united co-operation of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Let us, then, here observe that similarly every act of man, *qua* man, is an effect of the co-operative exercise of his three great faculties—knowledge, power, will. Although knowledge is distinct from power, and power is distinct from will, and will is distinct from knowledge, still all three faculties are invariably called into play when a human act is performed. So essentially united are all these three powers, indeed, that to eliminate or arrest the influence of any one of them would be to effectually arrest the act itself.

Take the simplest illustration. Suppose it is a question of communicating a piece of news. Here three conditions must be realised. Firstly, I must *know* what it is that I am going to enunciate. Secondly, I must possess the *power* of representing my knowledge so that it may be understood by others—*i.e.*, I must be able to clothe my thoughts in words or signs expressive of my ideas; and, thirdly, I must possess the *will—i.e.*, I must have the intention and the desire to exercise my power of speech, since (*a*) to possess knowledge, and (*b*) the power of communicating it, without the (*c*) will, would be wholly nugatory.

Or, take a somewhat different example. An artist is about to produce a picture. Before a line of it can be drawn three wholly distinct, but intimately connected, conditions must be realised. He must possess within his own mind the idea or

scene before he can depict it on the canvas. Secondly, he must possess power to express this idea or scene—that is to say, he must have the ability so to guide his brush and to lay on pigments, as to reproduce externally the inward conception of his mind. But, though these two conditions are of the most absolute necessity, they will not, of themselves, suffice. A third condition is essential before the act can be performed and the scene or image painted ; and that is, that the artist wills to exert his faculties for its production. It is only when knowledge, power, and will combine in one united effort that any result may be hoped for, or is even possible. This Trinity within the soul of man co-operates in every single act that man can consciously perform. In fact, destroy knowledge, then power and will remain at a standstill. Destroy power, then knowledge and will become useless. Destroy will, then power and knowledge must ever remain inoperative.

All three are indispensable, and no more than these three are requisite to produce the particular effect, whatever that effect may be. Thus, though power, knowledge, and will are all distinct, yet they unite so as to produce one indivisible act.

In this manner, faintly and feebly, yet very truly, we may trace the image of the Adorable Trinity in every action which we consciously perform. As every creative act is the work of the Three Divine Persons ; as every *opus ad extra* is *per ipsum*, *i.e.*, by the Power of the Father ; *cum ipso*, *i.e.*, through the Wisdom of the Son ; and *in ipso*, *i.e.*, in virtue of the Will of the Holy Spirit, so every human act is the work of the three faculties of the one human soul ; so that every human achievement is produced by means of the

power of man, through the *knowledge* of man, and in virtue of the *deliberate will* of man.

In His infinite goodness God has destined us to be eternally happy with Him amid the untold and unimagined splendours of Heaven. He is our Father, and we are His children ; and, as even an earthly parent loves to see his own character and likeness reflected in his offspring, so does God wish to see some trace of His own infinite and ineffable beauty reflected in us.

God Himself laid the foundations of this resemblance in the very moment of creation, and rendered it yet more close when we were regenerated in holy Baptism. It only remains for us now to fill in the picture, and (in so far as human frailty will permit) to increase and intensify the likeness by the practice of virtue and perfection. ' Be ye perfect," says our Divine Master, "as your heavenly Father is perfect." We must, consequently, seek, according to the measure of our weakness, to clothe ourselves with the virtues and perfections of the Deity, and to realise all that our position in creation imposes upon us.

There is no honour so great, no dignity, no privilege, no benefit so exalted as that of being, by adoption, the children of God, and, by grace, participators even of the Divine nature. What a thrill of joy and gratitude should pass through our heart of hearts when we call to mind that we are not, like the plants and trees, mere growing things ; nor, like the birds and beasts of the forest, mere sensitive and living organisms, but the rational and conscious sons of God.

What an exquisite delight to know and to feel, with all the certainty of Divine faith, that beneath this perishable vesture of vile clay—this earthly

garment of flesh and blood—there dwells an immortal and imperishable soul, made to the very image and likeness of the eternal, uncreated and infinite Beauty! All else passes. That—whether for our greater glory, or for our greater ignominy—remains. The body will grow decrepit and decay. Time will plough deep furrows in the face. The eyes will become dim and sightless, and the footsteps faltering and slow. The hair will turn white as winter's frost, and at last the house of clay will totter and crumble to pieces and mingle with the dust. But as a granite rock in the midst of some mighty river rests unmoved and immovable when all around is rushing and whirling by, so the soul remains when all else disappears. Nations, like the leaves, have their time to fall. People vanish, and races become extinct. The earth itself shall be burnt up by fire, and the starry lamps now glowing in the midnight sky shall be put out; but the soul knows no decay, no dissolution, no death.

> The stars shall fade away; the sun himself
> Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years;
> But THOU shalt flourish in immortal youth,
> Unhurt amidst the war of elements,
> The wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds.

To what conclusion does this lead us? Well, if we are made for eternity, let us live for eternity and work for eternity, and not waste our energies and spend our strength on the trumpery things of time. No one balancing the relative claims of time and of eternity, and realising, however faintly, the contrast between the two terms, would or could give himself up to the frivolities, petty ambitions and empty honours of a tottering and fast-decaying world.

CHAPTER VI.

VESTIGES OF THE BLESSED TRINITY IN IRRATIONAL CREATURES.

"In all creatures," says St. Thomas of Aquin, "is found impressed a likeness to the Trinity, in the sense that we find in every creature things which lead us to the Divine Persons as their cause. For every creature subsists in its individual being (*esse*); has a form which determines its species, and has relations to something else" (St. Th., q. 45, a. 7).

St. Augustine refers to the same truth when he remarks, in the sixth book of his *Treatise on the Trinity*, "Recognising the Creator by means of the things which are created (Rom. i. 20), we ought also to understand the existence of a Trinity, of which every creature, so far as it is worthy to do so, bears the impress."

We have already considered man as the image and likeness of God. We have already pointed out how he reflects in his soul, and to some extent even in his body, the mystery of the Adorable Trinity. We will now pass from the consideration of men to the contemplation of the rest of the visible universe, and see if we cannot discover some traces of God's uncreated beauty, even in the material and perishable objects about us.

I look out over the far-stretching earth. I gaze

in dreamy wonder at the sun and stars, and the fathomless interstellar spaces. I contemplate the gigantic mountains crowned with eternal snows; the warm southern seas, blue as the heatherbell, extending to endless distances; the leafy forests, the fields of golden corn, the meadowland and fruity orchards; or I plunge into the shadowy summer woods, and roam among the branching trees till my senses become enthralled by the infinite variety of their types and textures. The wild flowers, with their wealth of colouring and endless diversity of form, enchant my eye; and while I am yet dazzled by the brilliance of the jewelled wing of some wandering butterfly, the gladsome notes of a joyous bird startle the solemn silence of the scene.

As I contemplate the countless myriads of objects, I call to mind that one and all are the effects of a supreme Cause, and that the most minute, as well as the most vast, has been formed and fashioned by the simple *fiat* of the one infinite and triune God.

And knowing God to be the author of all, I shall naturally expect to detect in them some slight trace of His hands. We shall not expect, of course, to behold God's image reflected as faithfully in what is material and perishable as in what is spiritual and supernatural. Nevertheless, just as the image of God is indelibly impressed on the soul, so we are reasonably led to infer that, in a less perfect and more shadowy way, some vestige of that image may also be discovered by the thoughtful student everywhere throughout the whole expanse of creation.

We shall be prepared to find the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, at least in dim outline, written

large across the whole face of Nature. We shall expect to find all things constructed and built up with a view to unity and trinity. We shall expect to find, in the first place, a threefold division bound together in some form of unity, and, in the second place, a unity falling away into a threefold division—that is to say, one, when considered from one point of view, and three, when considered from another point of view.

Let us begin with the widest and most general conception, that of Creation. "The Creation" embraces in a single word whatever God's hands have made, and includes every being that is not Himself. Yet this prodigious multitude of different entities falls naturally into three (and only three) great categories. Every object in creation must range itself under one of these three heads: (1) the wholly spiritual, (2) the wholly material, or (3) the mixed (that in which the spiritual and the material are combined to produce one single suppositum)—*e.g.*, Man. In other words, three distinct and wholly unlike worlds are included in the one creation: the material world, which includes the whole physical universe; the purely spiritual world, which includes all the angelic hosts, the good and the evil spirits; and thirdly, that world which is in part spiritual and in part material—the human race, each member of which rejoices in a material body and a spiritual soul. Thus all finite things, though forming one vast creation, are yet separated into three great divisions.[1]

If we pass on to consider some of the circumstances—the *necessary* circumstances—of existence, we shall find that the shadow of the Trinity still encompasses it. For example, it is not a mere

[1] *Vide Die Schöpfungslehre*, von Dr. J. Oswald, 1885.

accident, but a positive necessity, that creatures should exist *in Time*. So soon as the first creature begins to exist, Time dawns. Every creature becomes subject to the laws of Time, and is bound by them as by chains of iron. But Time, like the Trinity, has three necessary relations : it is (*a*) past, (*b*) present, and (*c*) future. Observe, this is not in any sense an arbitrary division, but one which is inherent in the very nature of time. Try to separate time into a greater or less number of divisions. You cannot. All time must be either time past, or time present, or time to come. No man can as much as conceive a fourth kind of time, nor can anyone reduce the three divisions to a lesser number. We cannot think of time except as past, present, and future ; and yet time embraces *every* object on earth in its relentless grasp. Furthermore, as the Son is born of the Father only, whereas the Holy Ghost proceeds from Father and Son, so the *present* is born of the past only, whereas the *future* proceeds from past and present.

Or, instead of existence in general, take a special form of existence—*viz.*, life. In this, also, we shall find the idea of the Trinity clearly expressed. God has endowed a vast number of creatures with life. Life is enjoyed by trees, shrubs, flowers—*i.e.*, *vegetative* life. Life is also a possession of insects, birds, animals—*i.e.*, *sensitive* life ; and life also falls to the share of man's immortal soul, which, in common with angels and archangels, lives a *rational* and *intellectual* life. Here, then, we notice that all life breaks up into three divisions, and no more. And again let me call attention to the fact that this is no arbitrary division, but one existing in Nature itself ; a division not

due to the fancy of a man, who is seeking to build up a theory, but due to the action of God alone.

Now, descending to the lowest form of life, we shall find that it also encloses a threefold condition of being. A plant exists under three distinct forms before it completes the full cycle of its being. First there is the seed or fruit; secondly there is the green stalk or trunk of whatever species it may be; and thirdly there is the flower. So soon as the flower is fully blown and departs, we again reach the seed, and then begins the cycle over again: (1) seed, (2) stalk or trunk, (3) flower, in one continuously recurring series.

If from the lowest form of life we ascend to the highest—*i.e.*, rational life—a similar phenomenon is observable. The soul must, as the shrub, pass through three progressive stages before attaining its fullest possible development, and the final purpose of its creation. It starts with the life of simple natural intelligence. Then by baptism it advances to the higher life of Divine grace; and finally, if it persevere, it ends by attaining a life of eternal glory in heaven. It is from first to last precisely one and the same soul, yet at each stage in its wonderful career it enjoys a totally different and wholly superior form of life. The man who enjoys the life of nature remains the same individual when, by baptism, he begins to live the life of grace, and the same still when he comes to live the life of glory. The unity of the individual, and the trinity of life that he leads, recalls the unity and the trinity in God. Thus we have nature, grace and glory in the one soul of man, and Father, Son and Holy Ghost in one substance of God. Grace presupposes and (chronologically) follows

nature;[1] glory presupposes nature as well as grace, and proceeds from both (from nature as a necessary condition, and from grace as an efficient cause), and so the soul, "born again" to the life of grace, suggests the birth of the Son from the Father only, and the sanctified soul lifted up, through grace, to the life of Glory in Heaven suggests the procession of the Holy Ghost from Father *and* Son.

The farther we extend our investigations the more struck we shall be by the marvellous manner in which vestiges of the Trinity are discernible in every part of the measureless creation; even in the commonest objects on which our eyes can rest. It might seem difficult at first glance to discover any resemblance to the triune nature of God—say, for example, in such familiar things as rocks, mountains, seas, lakes, etc. Yet even in all these there is much to suggest it.

Thus we notice that all material things are bound on every side by lines: in fact, it is these lines which determine their form and appearance. Everything has a certain definite outline. But lines are capable of only three possible arrangements, and every created form must be contained in space by one of these three, as it must be contained in time by one of the three divisions of duration.

Let us consider these three arrangements.

First, there is the simple straight line.

Secondly, there are a series of simple lines arranged so as to produce a surface.

Thirdly, there are a combination of surfaces so arranged as to produce a solid.

[1] Normally, though not of course necessarily—*e.g.*, we have an exception in the case of the Blessed Virgin.

Now, every object in the whole visible universe is in form (*a*) a line, or combination of lines; (*b*) a surface, or a combination of surfaces; or (*c*) a solid, or combination of solids. In this respect every extended substance falls under a triple division.

But, what is still more singular, each of these three terms is itself made up of a unity and trinity.

A mathematical straight line, though one, possesses three distinct yet essential parts—*i.e.*, the beginning, the end, and their connection. We cannot even conceive an actual straight line without these three necessary parts. There must be a point from which the line starts, and a point at which it terminates, and a space between. For were there no space between there would be no line, as the one point would be identical with the other.

The same shadow of the Trinity may be found also in surfaces. Every surface is contained by three lines (or by combinations of three). The simplest form of surface that we can imagine is a triangle, and that demands, as an absolute condition of its existence, at least three lines. It is impossible to find in the whole realm of nature any surface whatsoever with less than three sides, for with less than three straight lines we cannot enclose a space. As God necessarily contains Three Persons, so a line necessarily contains three parts; and a surface necessarily contains three lines. If we examine any rectilinear figure we please, we shall find that it is either a triangle, or, at all events, a compound of two or more triangles. A square, for example, or any other form of parallelogram, is nothing more than two triangles laid one against the other. Take this printed page. Draw an imaginary line from one corner

to the opposite, and it at once becomes evident that it is in reality but the union of two complete triangles. If we examine a pentagon, we shall find that it is but a cluster of three triangles; a hexagon a cluster of four triangles; a heptagon a cluster of five; and so on, no matter what may be the number or even the relative length of the lines which the figure contains. The most complicated form will ever be found to be in simple truth but a conglomeration of triangles.

Now let us pass from mere surfaces to solids. A solid is necessarily of three dimensions. Every solid body is made up of three, and only three—*viz.*, length, breadth and thickness. There is no material object in the whole world which is not contained by these three—they cover all conceivable things from the vastest sun to the smallest grain of sand. As we cannot conceive any visible object possessing less than these three dimensions, so neither can we conceive any object possessing more than three. A fourth dimension is unthinkable; and a material entity with less than three is equally so.

Thus vestiges of the Trinity follow and pursue us wherever we direct our investigations. We will now consider if any additional traces of the Trinity can be discovered in stones and metals, and in the waters of oceans, lakes and rivers. Let us commence with the commonest of all objects —*viz.*, water. Water covers nearly two-thirds of the entire earth, and is marked by most distinct traces of the Trinity. The substance of God is one, but this Divine substance is terminated in the three Persons, so that each is a distinct suppositum. So the substance of water is one, yet it is found to possess three different states of being.

It may exist in the form of ice, hard and rigid as marble; it may exist in its ordinary condition, soft and yielding, as in a summer sea; and thirdly, it may, by the application of great heat, assume the form of invisible steam, rising into the higher regions of the atmosphere.

It may change from one condition to the other and back again, but within the limits of these three it must ever remain.

And what we have pointed out in the case of water may be said with equal truth of all metals, such as iron, copper, gold, silver, lead, etc. They, one and all, are capable of existing in three distinct states: firstly, hard and solid, as we generally see them; secondly, liquid, as when melted down in the furnace; and, thirdly, in the form of gas or vapour. Man may not have power to apply heat of sufficient fierceness and intensity to vaporise all metals, but where such a terrifically high temperature is attained, as, for example, in the sun, even the most stubborn metals may be reduced to a gaseous state. The degree of heat present in the photospheres of the stars, for instance, is sufficient (so Lockyer tells us) to vaporise magnesium, sodium, iron, barium, etc. Indeed, copper and zinc and other substances have actually been detected in a vaporous state in the sun. And, given a sufficiently high temperature, probably all earthly substances might be reduced to a liquid and to a gaseous state. Was not the entire earth once but a gas cloud? This is certainly the teaching of many scientists.[1] Here, then, we have an

[1] "At first the masses (composing the solar system, with its planets and moons, etc.) were an incandescent gas, and then an incandescent liquid" (see *A Christian Apology*, pp. 236-7, vol. i. By Paul Schanz, D.D., D.Ph.).

endless variety of substances, each possessing its own nature and characteristics, yet capable of existing in three totally different forms—solid, liquid and gaseous. Except in one of these states we cannot imagine them ; yet we have no difficulty in admitting that they may exist indifferently in any one of the three.

Let us now turn to a somewhat different object—the sun. The great orb of day is often referred to as an image of God. It is the sun that brightens, cheers and gladdens the heart, and makes life possible to man and beast. It is the sun that at its rising calls men to labour, and that transforms the earth from darkness into light and beauty. But if we study it somewhat more carefully, we shall find that it, like all else, combines a trinity of operation with its unity of substance. The sun is one, but its functions are threefold. In order to illustrate this, let us arrest one of its golden rays after traversing some ninety-three millions of miles to our earth, and see what it reveals. That simple ray is indeed a most exquisite figure of the triune nature of God. In one God there are three Persons ; in one ray there are three principles. What are they ? Well, examine the ray and we shall see.

Suppose I am a prisoner in a lonely dungeon and I watch a beam of golden splendour penetrating into my dark and dismal cell.

My eye will at once recognise in it (1) *a principle of light.* It scatters darkness from its path, and wherever it falls it brings light and brightness. But this is not all. My eye perceives that it brings not only light but also colour. It paints the rose red and the lily white ; it adorns the opening daisy and adds a thousand tints to the

violet. It would take up too much space to explain this fully now, but anyone studying the matter will find that the sun, besides being a principle of light, is also (2) *a principle*, or at least a condition, *of colour*. The sun, indeed, is the greatest and cleverest of artists. Who, indeed, can paint with such consummate skill or with such a delicate touch? And what is the third principle? I extend my shivering manacled hand and let the wandering ray fall upon it, and immediately I experience a sense of genial warmth. And even though I close my eyes and so cut off all perception of light and of colour, I still continue to enjoy the pleasing glow. It is therefore (3) *a principle of heat* as well as of light and colour. The one sun represents the one God; its threefold operation the three Divine Persons.

Nor need we stop here. If we now transfer our attention to each of these properties, or principles, existing in the one ray of light, we can easily convince ourselves that each, in its turn, contains a still further image of the Trinity. It would take too much space to explain this in all three cases, so, omitting all further reference to light and heat, let us trace this image in the laws of colour.

What a beautiful thing is colour! Nothing is so varied, so rich, so ethereal as the colouring in nature. Every species of flower seems to hoist its own flag. Every kind of fruit seems to blush in its own inimitable manner. The infinite number of different shades and tints, even of the same colour, almost surpasses computation. Besides the vegetable kingdom, call to mind the untold myriads of insects—especially tropical flies, moths, butterflies and beetles—with wings

encrustated, as it were, with gems and precious stones that glance and sparkle in a thousand gorgeous and brilliant dyes. At first sight colour seems to be far too complicated to reflect the triune nature of God. A closer and more accurate observation, however, will reveal to us that all these infinite varieties of colour are reducible to three; and that these three are contained in a single ray of sunshine.

A single ray of pure white light falling on a prism will break up into three clear and simple colours. We are not, of course, forgetting that there are seven so-called colours in the solar spectrum. But there are *only three primary or radical colours*. The other four are but complementary, and are formed by these three flowing together at the lines of contact and mingling in different proportions.[1] All, or almost all, scientists agree that there are but three elementary colours, and that all the rest are but combinations of these three as they mingle in different degrees and intensity.

The original ray is white, and that may be taken as a figure of the unity of nature in God. It is resolvable into three primary colours, however, which may well suggest the trinity of persons. And as every object in existence is the work of the three Divine Persons, so every colour and hue and shade visible to human eye is the work, if we may so express it, of the three primary colours, since it is formed by a combination of them in varying proportions. To these *three*

[1] Even two parallel lines of wet paint, one *blue* and the other *yellow*, will be found to produce a *green* line at the points of contact. This example, though not *altogether* applicable, will serve to illustrate our meaning.

colours, indeed, is due every entrancing effect of golden sunset, every gem of "ray divine," every gleam of fascinating loveliness.

All the most exquisite scenes conjured forth by the painter's brush, every fairy-like view in forest, field, mountain, sky or sea, so far as the harmony and variety of the colouring are concerned, owe their existence to this wonderful trio. Hence we may declare with truth that over all that is fairest and comeliest in the regions of light this trinity of colour throws its magic spell.

There is some dispute, it would seem, as to which are the three primary colours, but that three alone exist is generally, if not universally, admitted.

We may here observe, too, that though the three fundamental colours dissolve in the unity of white light, yet they coalesce in such a manner that each of the three preserves its distinctive attribute. Red is the caloric, yellow (or emerald green) the luminous, and blue the chemical (actinic) ray.[1]

[1] "The employment of an impure spectrum, *i.e.*, one mixed with white light, and some misunderstood experiments with absorptive coloured media, induced Sir David Brewster to propound the theory in his work on 'Optics' in *Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopædia* (pp. 72 *et seq.*) that white light has in reality but three primary constituents—red, yellow and blue. He announced this in the work just cited as an original and independent discovery; but he had been long anticipated in his doctrine of the triune character of light, first by Wunsch, at Leipzig, in 1792, and not long subsequently, at the beginning of the present century, by that truly great philosopher and physicist, Thomas Young, in this country. Nay, more; so far from Brewster having made a discovery, he absolutely enunciated an erroneous doctrine, and took a retrograde step in comparison with those of his predecessors. It is quite true that the light of the sun, as it reaches us, is com-

If it is permissible to follow this analogy out further, we should say that the caloric ray evidently corresponds to the Father, the warm source of light ; the luminous ray to the Son, the Light of the world ; and the chemical ray to the Spirit, which pierces into the innermost recesses of the heart, and imbues it with peculiar qualities and forces. One of the instances given by Woodward is very suggestive. Some plants (cucumbers and melons) were put under a glass, which was so coloured as to absorb the blue (chemical) rays of light. The consequence was that the plants grew with the greatest rapidity, and put forth luxuriant blossoms, but just as quickly they faded away again without bringing forth fruit. Does not this look like a physical reflection of the Christian precept, "Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thess. v. 19), because without Him no real fruit can ripen ?

What has been said of colour may be applied also to sound. "The kingdom of sound," remarks Theodore Christlieb, D.D., "is governed by the triad as the basis of all chords ; nor does this destroy the original unity of the keynote, but, on the contrary, makes it an organised unity embracing multiplicity."[1]

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pounded of three colours, and of three only, but unfortunately two out of Brewster's three colours happen to be the wrong ones ! For while it is the veriest truism to assert that blue and yellow paint mixed together form green, no such result can be predicated of the mixture of blue and yellow light, which mixture, so far from being green, is white. These colours are, in fact, complementary to each other. The three primitive colours are a scarlet red, emerald green, and violet blue or blue violet" (see *Knowledge*, Jan., 1886, p. 95).

[1] *Modern Doubt and Christian Belief*, p. 277.

So, again, in each note of music there are three distinct qualities—*viz.*, (1) the strength or intensity, (2) the pitch, and (3) the quality (*timbre*).

We may also remark that every material thing exists (1) in time, (2) in space, (3) and in motion; and just as time and space, as we have already seen, are terms of triple aspect, so motion embraces three relations: (1) direction, (2) distance, (3) velocity.

Many further objects might be selected to illustrate the truth of our contention; but perhaps more than enough has been said to prove how wondrously even the soulless and senseless creation reflects back the image of its great Fashioner. If we may catch such glimpses, even in our present condition of comparative ignorance, who shall say what a magnificent picture of God the visible creation will present to us, when we can contemplate it from the other side of the veil?

PART II

CHAPTER I.

THOUGHTS ON THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

"What is meant by saying that God is infinite? We seem to wish to be told, as if we had nothing given us to throw light on the question. The outward exhibition of infinitude is mystery; and the mysteries of nature and grace are nothing else than the mode in which His infinitude encounters us and is brought home to our minds. Men confess that He is infinite, yet they start and object as soon as His infinitude comes in contact with their imagination."—CARD. NEWMAN, *Serm. to Mixed Cong.*

THERE is scarcely any doctrine so beautiful or so consoling as the Catholic doctrine of the Blessed Eucharist. It is the central dogma of our religion and the very focus of Divine love. When, indeed, we think of the excellence and the grandeur of this dogma, we are appalled at the large number of Christians who refuse to accept its truth, and instinctively ask ourselves why it is that so many, in most respects good and honest men, reject and denounce it with so much vehemence. Is it because such a doctrine finds no support in the pages of holy writ? No; that cannot be, for it is clearly and unmistakably laid down there in many noticeable passages; so clearly, indeed, that men are compelled to use violence, and to twist, contort and torture the obvious meaning of simple phrases in their vain efforts to escape from the Catholic interpretation.

Is it, then, because it was not taught in the early Church, nor countenanced by the Fathers and teachers of the first few centuries? Impossible. For history informs us that it was explicitly and emphatically taught in the Church from the very beginning, and not only taught, but, what is much more worthy of observation, taught *without a dissentient voice* for many long and eventful ages. It was not until the eleventh century that it met with any serious opposition. The famous Berengarius, Archdeacon of Angers, opposed it about the year 1050; but the Church, spread throughout the world, arose as one man and condemned him; while council after council solemnly denounced his assertion as heretical. After much controversy he renounced his error, and returned once more to the faith of his baptism.

If, then, both Scripture and tradition assert so unmistakably the truth of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, why do so many thousands of earnest Protestants deny it? They may assign various reasons, but if we analyse their statements and weigh their motives, I suspect that we shall find that the real secret of their repugnance to the doctrine lies precisely in its mysteriousness. They repudiate it because it is in itself so marvellous, so utterly unintelligible to the mind, and so brimming over with unfathomable difficulties. Men brought up on the principle of "private judgment" and "the open Bible interpreted by each individual," are startled and thrown back when they consider the literal meaning of Christ's words. They shudder and recoil when brought face to face with so tremendous a mystery. And though the utterances of Christ are plain and clear, and though He repeats

His most solemn declaration again and again, and ever in a more emphatic form, they still exclaim: "It cannot be! He surely must have *meant* something else? He must have been speaking figuratively and symbolically." They will allow anything rather than mystery; and prefer any alternative rather than submit their intellects to the obedience of faith. Hence they refuse to accept the infallible words, even of God Himself, so long as they convey incomprehensible truths.

But why do men find it difficult to accept the wonderful? Why are the mysteries of faith so hard to endure? Why is the incomprehensible in religion so repulsive to the natural sense of mankind? Well, for two reasons. Firstly, because they have never truly realised the extremely limited range of their own faculties; and, secondly, because they have never thoroughly mastered the fact that innumerable mysteries exist all around them, and are to be found in abundance even in the most ordinary and commonplace objects of daily life. Perhaps a few minutes will not be unprofitably spent in making these two points clear.

There is, of course, no creature upon earth that has been enriched with such countless and such signal favours as man. Yet priceless as many of them undoubtedly are, they fall immeasurably short of the infinite. Though man possesses extraordinary faculties, they are extremely restricted in their operation. Indeed, the truths which these faculties are able to reveal to him are the merest and meanest fraction, compared to those which still remain unrevealed. We are hemmed in upon every side. We live and move within an extremely narrow circle. We see, but only a short distance. The deep, fathomless depths of

the interstellar spaces lie at unmeasured distances beyond our view. The telescope may help us a little, but millions of leagues beyond the reach of any instrument are, undoubtedly, worlds and constellations, and vast planetary systems that no human eye has ever gazed upon. All that our most perfect glasses can reveal to us is just the outer fringe of the limitless garment of creation.

It is precisely the same with the sense of hearing. We hear, but it is only the grosser and coarser sounds. The more delicate voices of nature lie utterly beyond us. We can hear neither the impetuous rushing of the distant planets as they travel with lightning-like speed from one part of the heavens to another; nor the growing of the grass about our feet; nor the circulation of the sap and vital juices in shrub and tree; nor the bursting of the ten thousand times ten thousand microscopic cells giving birth to new life in its myriad forms. A veritable universe of sounds lies beyond the ken of the most delicate and sensitive human ear.

What has been remarked regarding the faculties of sight and hearing must be equally asserted of every other faculty, whether of smell, of taste, or of touch. And even if we arise from the senses of the body to contemplate the powers of the mind, the self-same laws of limitation are equally perceptible. The gift of reason or intelligence is, indeed, the highest and noblest gift of God to man in the natural order. It is this especially that establishes his claim to superiority over all the rest of the world around him. Yet how weak and inadequate a thing, after all, is unaided human reason! How restricted in its operation,

and how narrow the circle of its influence! As a tiny child in some immense library draws a book from the shelves and laboriously and painfully spells out a word or two from its closely-printed pages, so man, with infinite difficulty, spells out a word here and there in the infinite book of nature.

"In nature's infinite book of secrecy a little I can read," says Shakespeare. Yes, "*a little*"; but oh, how little! Man knows something—not much—about a few things. But there is nothing whatever of which he knows absolutely all that might be known. Indeed, without entering at all into the more ethereal world of mind or spirit, we may truly affirm that our acquaintance even with material things is of the scantiest and most unsatisfactory kind. What we do know concerning the gross physical world of matter, compared to what we do not know, is as a grain of sand to a mountain.

Unhappily, man's innate conceit induces him to dwell with complacency upon the little he does know, rather than to learn humility by contemplating the vast regions of truth lying beyond his mental vision. And this is in part the reason that so many are unwilling to accept the mysteries of faith. They are distressed and disturbed when they come across the incomprehensible in religion, and grow restive and dissatisfied, just as though mystery were a new experience, and as though they had never been brought into direct and personal relations with the incomprehensible and the inexplicable in nature itself. Their very surprise and hesitancy prove how entirely they have failed to grasp the fact that, without entering at all into the regions of the supernatural, they

must encounter endless mysteries at every step of their journey even through this natural life.

When we discourse of the Holy Eucharist, of Transubstantiation, of the Resurrection of the body, we hear cries of "Impossible." "Such things cannot be." "My reason revolts against such doctrines," and much else to the same effect. Dogmas which are at once incomprehensible and inexplicable, they imagine should be regarded as incredible. Hence the importance of realising how quite equally incomprehensible and inexplicable are many of the most ordinary operations of nature. All nature teems with insoluble mysteries. In every object, however commonplace, there are great depths, of which we can take no soundings; and dark chasms, into whose lurid bowels we may peer and peer, yet ever peer in vain. Now if so much of the *natural* world is a closed book to us, how much more should we expect the *supernatural* world to be? If this earth is so full of inexplicable difficulties, and of dark places through which the eye of the mind cannot penetrate, how much more should we expect to meet with similar and far greater difficulties and darknesses in the order of grace and of glory?

"Stand and consider the wondrous works of God," says the Holy Spirit by the lips of Job (xxxvii. 14). We will select one or two in the order of nature, that we may the better appreciate those which are proposed for our acceptance in the order of grace. We might pick out one of the more unusual and recondite phenomena of nature, but we rather prefer to select the most familiar we can think of; indeed, the simpler and the more commonplace the better. Take, then, magnetic attraction.

We must all have noticed how a magnet and a piece of steel will attract one another. The magnet exercises a force over steel, and draws it towards itself. How? We don't know. Nobody knows. It is a mystery in the natural order. The magnet and the steel are separated by a certain appreciable distance. How does the magnet throw its influence across that distance? Take two points, A and B, separated by the space of one inch (whether an inch or a thousand miles, the principle is the same). How can the magnet, resting at point A, act upon a piece of steel resting at point B, so as to overcome its native inertia, and to set it travelling over the intervening space? How, in other words, can a thing *act where it is not*—where it has no existence? What, if we may so express ourselves, is this invisible hand which the magnet stretches forth, and extends across the intervening space, and by which it overcomes the inertia of the steel and draws it to itself? We don't know. *No man can tell.* Nay, further: place an obstacle between the two. Interpose, say, a sheet of plate glass between the magnet and the steel. In other words, cut off the communication—what then? Why, this obstacle proves to be no obstacle. The magnet acts upon the steel even through the glass. The communication is not cut off. The steel responds to the action, and starts to meet the magnet. It presses with a real and measurable force against the glass, in its fruitless, yet ceaseless, efforts to reach the source of attraction; and so it will continue, as anyone may test by experience. And what a simple experiment is this! Yet how passing strange! How hopelessly unintelligible! Who can really unravel the mystery,

or give an exhaustive reply to our inquiries? No man. It is one among those numerous mysteries of which the world is full. The child of yesterday knows just as much about the secrets of magnetic attraction as the most learned scientist; that is to say, just nothing at all.

I might, further, point out how this attraction follows certain regular mathematical laws; how, for instance, its strength increases inversely as the square of the distance; but this might make the illustration needlessly complicated. Let me, then, merely suppose that while the experiment is proceeding, some learned exponent of science arrives on the scene. To my demand for an explanation he simply laughs good-naturedly at my simplicity, and exclaims condescendingly: "Oh, that is a very simple thing! That, sir, is nothing more or less than magnetic attraction." *He* is quite satisfied. He imagines he has answered me; but, in sober truth, has he explained anything? Nothing whatever. He has merely given the phenomenon a name. Am I any the wiser? Well, I now know *what to call* it, certainly; but I know no more *about it* than I did before. The mystery remains. Call it by what name you please, you cannot explain the fact. I am still face to face with the inexplicable. The only answer possible is, that things are as they are, and act as they act, because God has so willed and decreed. If, then, He decrees the inexplicable in the things of this world, why not in the things of the next world?

Here, then, we have a mystery—an inexplicable fact—in the very lowest department of creation, *viz.*, in inorganic and lifeless matter, in a piece of senseless and structureless iron ore. A mystery

that, in spite of all the boasted advance of science, man's mind is too imperfect to deal with or to investigate. He stands puzzled, confounded and humiliated before a simple fragment of loadstone.

The higher we ascend in the scale of creation the more do wonders grow, both in number and in intensity. How unspeakably more wondrous is the vegetable than the mineral kingdom! It would be easy to point out a host of marvels in every flower and shrub, and blossom and bud; but to economise space I will pass by the vegetable kingdom altogether, and ask the reader's kind attention for awhile, whilst I strive to point out the mysteries present in one of the commonest operations observable in the animal world—an operation which the reader has, no doubt, witnessed time after time, and yet one in which he perhaps never saw anything special to wonder at. Familiarity with a process has so strong a tendency, indeed, to destroy our power of appreciating its marvellousness, that I think it will be of considerable assistance to us if the subject be introduced by a somewhat extravagant supposition.

Suppose, then, that some unknown person were to come to us from another world, and producing a small vessel should say: "Here is a small oval box or receptacle made out of lime, and filled with a thickish viscid or glutinous substance. Keep it carefully for a few weeks in a warm and even temperature and I undertake to say that, without any further attention on your part, it will gradually transform itself into a superb gold chronometer, with dial, hands, mainspring, and hair-spring, lever escapement, and everything complete. Every wheel will be in its place and in ceaseless motion. Each hinge, rivet, screw,

and other accessory part will be carefully formed and placed in position. The whole will constitute a watch, ticking merrily all the day, and registering the time at each succeeding moment." Such a supposition is enough to make one smile. One instinctively exclaims, "What nonsense! What a ludicrous idea! How extravagantly foolish; and, above all, how absolutely impossible!" If, indeed, such a promise were really made, we should be inclined to think (1) either that the stranger was stark mad; or (2) that it was a piece of mere clever juggling; or, if the promised result did indeed take place, that (3) a miracle of a very extraordinary kind had been wrought.

Yet, strange though it may seem, what is happening continually in nature is very analogous to what I have supposed. What we may actually see taking place in the animal world is very similar indeed to what has been described, only immeasurably more extraordinary, immeasurably more mysterious, and but for the fact that we can actually witness the whole process for ourselves—we should certainly say, immeasurably more impossible!

A watch is a beautiful thing; a complicated thing; a thing of many parts, admirably put together and most cunningly devised and adjusted. But a bird is immeasurably more beautiful, immeasurably more complicated, and a creature of a far greater number of most elaborate parts far more exquisitely put together.

Take the egg[1] of any bird you please—let us say a goldfinch. When first laid by the hen, what is it but (1) an oval receptacle or box formed

[1] "The egg from which most animals and plants are developed is a simple cell," says Ernst Haeckel in his *Natürliche Schöpfungsgeschichte*, vol. i., chap. viii.

of lime or other calcareous matter ; or, in plain English, a shell ; and (2) filled with a thickish viscid glutinous substance ? This substance is structureless and shapeless, and, for the most part, almost colourless ; yet, keep it in a suitable temperature for a few weeks and it will become gradually transformed by the power of God acting through natural laws ; not, indeed, into a watch, no ; but into what is infinitely more admirable and estimable, *viz.*, into a living, breathing, sentient bird. Within the fragile shell, no thicker than your nail, changes and transformations are being gradually wrought, so singular and mysterious, that I know not to what I can compare them unless it be to the changes that the earth went through during the six days of creation, when God brooded over the face of the deep, and drew order and symmetry out of chaos. A living being is being formed. The bones of leg and wing, the spinal column with all its articulations, the skull and pointed beak and sharp claws emerge, as if by magic, from out the liquid mass. Not only is each brittle bone beautifully fashioned, exquisitely finished, and polished as smooth as ivory —each different, yet all correlated—but they are knit together and adjusted with the utmost precision and harmony, and built up, *without hands*, not anyhow, not at haphazard, but according to a distinct and definite plan. Then, without as much disturbance as would suffice to fracture the film of shell, flesh and skin clothe and envelop the entire skeleton ; while throughout the whole there run innumerable channels and secret passages and ducts carrying arterial and venous blood from one extremity to the other. Invisible fingers are still moulding the beautiful form of the bird, and

arranging its interior organs of nutrition and digestion, and forming that marvellous pneumatic pump, the heart, on the strictest scientific principles, which is to keep forcing the blood circulating throughout the whole organism year after year, without cessation, so long as life lasts.

Still the work proceeds. The original viscid glutinous liquid is all that the shell contains, or has ever contained. From it, therefore, and from naught else, is drawn the gorgeous plumage that is to be the glory of the bird. The wings are supplied with long, light, pointed feathers, suitable for flight, and the breast is coated with softest down of many brilliant colours. All is daintily finished, delicately tinted, and Divinely made. *Digitus Dei est hic.* Yet, observe. The fragile shell is still intact. No fresh material has been introduced. All—bones, muscles, veins, blood, brain, skull, beak, claws, down, feathers, liver, heart, lungs, etc.—have been constructed out of the same simple structureless liquid albumen, mucus, cell-substance, or protoplasm—call it what you will.

Place your ear gently against the shell. Listen. Can you hear the great Artist at work ? Can you detect any sound of implement or tool while the transformation is going on ? Where but a short time ago there was nothing but a transparent liquid, we now find that the most wondrous and complex objects and organs have been manufactured. The eyes so bright, clear and penetrating of the imprisoned bird, though made *for light* have been constructed in *darkness*, and from the simple protoplasm. And consider what this means. For though the eye is but one organ, and a comparatively insignificant one, yet what a complicated

thing it is! It includes the pupil, the sclerotic, the cornea, the iris, the crystalline lens, the vitreous humour, the ciliary processes, choroid coat, the retina, with the various blood-vessels which feed it, and the muscles which move it and adjust it, etc. Yet all are there, and in their proper positions. So of all else, the wings so swift and true and light, the throat and lungs and vocal cords, all accurately attuned and prepared within the silent shell, await but its breaking, to emerge into the light of day, and to discourse soft sounds over hill and dale. All is being completed within that miniature universe. All is there. Nothing has been forgotten. Matter enough, but no more than enough, has been stored within the shell for the construction of every limb, organ and muscle, and all else, down to the smallest fragment of down that goes to complete the perfection of the bird. At last the shell breaks. The viscid fluid has disappeared, and in its place a bird darts forth instinct with life; with glancing eyes, and flapping wings, and palpitating heart, and with a throat eloquent with song and softly warbled harmonies.

What a strange and wonderful history! What a stupendous miracle of Divine power and wisdom! Talk of mystery! Talk of the incomprehensible! Well, here in this familiar phenomenon we are confronted with a whole world of unsearchable mysteries. And so far from disappearing or diminishing as we inquire more searchingly and investigate more minutely, they rather become more insoluble and unfathomable. Nay, if we have not yet been startled at the sight of these and similar transformations, is it not just precisely *because we have not paused to consider* them attentively, but passed them heedlessly by? and because

custom has dulled our minds, and because what is perpetually going on and repeating itself for ever and ever, fails to provoke attention or even to excite inquiry? For what is the fact? The undeniable fact is, that all creation is palpitating with mystery. Not a cubic inch of earth, air or water, but contains enough to bewilder and confound the most enlightened intelligence. We live and breathe in an atmosphere of mystery. Above and below and around us lie unexplored and inexplorable depths—depths which defy all human soundings, and into whose dark and unexplored recesses man gazes fearfully and tremulously, but always in vain. What do I say? Around him? Below him? Why even *within* him mystery dwells. Man is to himself the most bewildering of enigmas. Whence come life, motion and sensation? What *is* life? What are thought and imagination? What is memory which binds the past with the present, and links together in one co-ordinate whole the experience of many eventful years?

What is sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye, that steeps our senses in forgetfulness, and steals us awhile from our own company? Surely a strange and mysterious thing. And dreams—what are they, and whence do they arise? Whence come those strange and wondrous scenes, the phantasmagoria that pass and repass before the closed eyes of the sleeper, with all the vividness and speaking impressiveness of waking life; that call back the forms of the dead and the absent, and repeople earth with long-forgotten images of friends and foes? In the somnial state the sleeper sees clearly and basks in the sunshine, though all the time he may be really buried in an

Egyptian darkness : he hears sounds and converses with his friends though he rests in truth in unbroken silence ; and even though his limbs lie motionless in his bed, he may still be fighting battles, scaling mountains, or fording rivers. He is the sport of fancy, the plaything of hallucinations. In sleep he is, and he is not ; at once all things and nothing. What is sleep ? The echo answers, What ? We are left to wonder and surmise.

Thus, question after question suggests itself to the inquiring mind, but for never a one is there an answer forthcoming. And, as it is with the mind, so it is with the body. Why does a child grow and develop till it reaches manhood, and then stop, to grow no higher ? Why is one pair of eyes brown and another blue ? Why is one infant masculine and the other feminine ? and how is the relative proportion of the sexes preserved throughout the world, and throughout the ages ?

So, again, how is life maintained by food and drink ? and by what marvellous process is the *same food* transformed into such *wholly different things* as blood and bone, artery and nerve, muscle and tendon, skin and hair, teeth and nails ? And by what means is each portion of the organism (*qua* organism) built up, distributed and maintained in activity ; and how is each instructed to discharge its own peculiar functions ?

We need not to be told that scientific men have affixed learned names to every natural process, and have carefully labelled every phenomenon. For that means nothing. Anybody can give a thing a name. Yet many seem to forget, or at least fail to realise, that to *name* is not to *explain.*

To label a mystery is not to solve it. A score of learned terms and definitions will not suffice to throw a bridge, even of gossamer, across an impassable gulf. If I refrain from suggesting further difficulties, it is by no means because I have exhausted my stock, but merely because space is limited.

We will conclude, then, with the remark that, to look out upon this material earth, and to fully realise how mysterious is every object in it (as soon as we probe the least degree beneath the surface), teaches us a profound lesson. It proves to us how singularly weak and puny a thing is the human mind itself; it shows us how straitened and confined is our knowledge of even the simplest things; and throws us into a disposition proper and fitting to receive with reverence and docility the incomprehensible truths of revelation. God is the infinitely Incomprehensible, dwelling in light inaccessible; and all His works have an element of the incomprehensible in them. But the higher we rise in the scale of creation the more profound do these mysteries become. Their high-water mark is reached when, transcending the natural altogether, we enter into the supernatural regions of grace and glory.

But of these we will deal another time.

CHAPTER II.

TRANSUBSTANTIATION AND MULTIPLICATION.

THE two greatest mysteries in connection with the Holy Eucharist are Transubstantiation and Multiplication. To understand the precise meaning of the doctrine of Transubstantiation we must endeavour to acquire the clearest idea possible of the difference between substance and accidents. Every object in creation is made up of these two elements. By the substance we mean a thing's very essence. By the accidents we mean its mere qualities. The word "substance" is from the Latin *sub*, and *stare*, *i.e.*, to stand under, to support, sustain. Substance, therefore, is that which stands under or supports the qualities perceived by our senses; that which lies behind the phenomena; that, in a word, in which the attributes and accidents of a thing may be said to reside. The accidents, on the other hand, are the mere qualities inherent in the substance; that which the substance supports; those external appearances or evidences by which the existence of the substance is recognised and made known to us.

An example will make this clear. A piece of iron ore is put into my hand. The first thing that strikes me is that it is unusually heavy. Then I notice, further, that it is of a certain shape, size, colour, hardness, temperature and

taste; and that when struck, it emits a peculiar sound, and so forth. By these and similar indications I am led to the conclusion that what I hold in my hand is a piece of iron. Yet neither the weight, size, colour, temperature, nor the taste, etc., is, itself, iron; nor do all these, even when added together, constitute iron. And this is clear, since every one of these qualities might be changed without in any way changing the substance. This is evident enough as regards the size and the shape; but the same holds good of all else. Thus the dull blackish colour, by the application of heat, becomes a brilliant red; by the application of greater heat it becomes a glowing white, yet it never ceases to be iron. So with regard to hardness. Cast the iron into the furnace, and though now soft and limpid as water, it is the same substance as before. There is no quality of which this may not be said. Take, for example, that quality which seems particularly inherent in all metals, *i.e.*, weight. Iron is heavy. True, but even heaviness is not of the essence of iron. Since it depends upon attraction, it will change according to circumstances, and under certain conditions disappear altogether. A cubic foot of iron, if transferred to the moon, will weigh less than at the surface of the earth, but a great deal more if deposited on the outer crust of the planet Saturn. Were every other material object annihilated, it would lose its entire weight, yet it would certainly not cease, on that account, to be iron. Again, the sound iron emits on being struck depends entirely upon its shape and size, etc. All these are mere qualities, and not even necessary qualities of the substance; and because not essential, we call them accidents. Yet,

observe, it is *only by these and similar accidents* that even the bare existence of the substance is made manifest to us.

Of substance in itself we know really nothing. If asked what the substance of such a familiar thing as iron is, we must confess our ignorance. We cannot tell. No living man has ever seen it. It is neither weight, nor shape, nor colour, nor taste, nor sound. Such phenomena simply indicate and inform us of the presence of a substance; the substance itself always eludes our grasp. It is just as invisible to our eyes, just as impervious to our senses, as the spirit of an archangel. All substances—as distinct from accidents—are denizens of the invisible world. No man hath seen them at any time.

Let us apply what has been said to the adorable mystery of the Holy Eucharist. I ascend the altar to say Mass, and taking a piece of bread I hold it before me, and pronounce the solemn words of consecration, and by the infinite power of God the "mystery of faith" is wrought. The substance of bread is no longer there. In its place there is the substance of the Body of Christ. Can I detect the change? As has been already pointed out, we cannot see any substance whatsoever; therefore we cannot see the substance of bread. But as it is impossible to see the substance of bread, of course it is impossible to see that another substance has been substituted for it.

All that we can see, touch or taste, are the accidents, but they have not been changed or in any way affected. There is no miracle, therefore, in the fact that when we look at a consecrated Host we do not see the substance of Christ's Body. The miracle would be if we did. All that we see

after the consecration is just precisely what we saw before the consecration, *viz.*, the accidents of bread. And our senses are not deceived, for the things we see are really there, *viz.*, the *accidents* of bread—the invisible *substance* alone having departed.

Transubstantiation then means that on the due recitation of certain words by a properly ordained minister, God by His omnipotence transubstantiates, *i.e.*, changes the substance—not the accidents—of bread into His own sacred Body, so that what was just now bread is no longer bread, but the living Flesh of the Son of God.

Now it certainly seems, at first blush, a most marvellous and unheard-of thing to change wheaten bread into a living human organism! And it is undoubtedly a stupendous mystery. Yet, after all, is it not very much what every man, woman and child is doing each day of their lives? I must not be understood to press the analogy too far, but the analogy is worth pointing out. When a man sits down at table and feeds himself on bread and wine, what becomes of that food? Are not the nutritive elements of it gradually changed into his own body and blood? Does it not in very truth enter into the composition of his own substance? Is it not an undeniable physiological fact, that what is bread and wine to-day may be flesh and blood and bone to-morrow?

Why, the very purpose of food is to keep the body in repair. Particle by particle, and molecule by molecule the entire body crumbles away. It needs to be constantly rebuilt; and every effete cell and exhausted atom is replaced by fresh atoms formed from the food. Medical men assure us

that our bodies are undergoing a continual process of destruction and reconstruction. This goes on ceaselessly till at last no single fibre of any limb or organ of our former body remains. The entire organism has been fashioned from the bread and wine, or other food on which we have lived. Supposing a man to live exclusively on bread and wine, then *the bread and wine become literally changed into his body and blood!*

This change of common bread and wine by the natural processes of nutrition, digestion and assimilation, into the complex and extremely intricate form of the human body, is indeed a mystery in the order of nature. It is a change wrought by the omnipotence of the Creator, who has made all our organs and prescribed to each organ its special functions.

Now, let me ask: Since God enables us to change bread and wine into our body and blood by the ordinary physical processes, why should He not enable us (if He so please) to do the same thing *instantly?* And if into the substance of our own bodies, why not (supposing a sufficient motive) into the substance of His own sacred Body, which is as truly human as our own?

Having suggested this similitude I must not fail to point out that the analogy can help us only to a limited extent. There are many and stupendous differences between the change of bread into flesh by the natural process of digestion, and the change of bread into the human flesh of Christ by means of the words of consecration.

It will be enough here to note some of the more striking.

I. In Transubstantiation the substance of bread is changed into the adorable Body of Christ not

indirectly, but directly; not by any gradual process, but by the *direct* power of God, and instantly. And further, the *whole substance* of bread is changed into the *whole substance* of Christ's Body.

II. In Transubstantiation the substance is changed, not so as to form what till then had no existence, but into that which already exists. That is to say, before the consecrating words are spoken our Lord's sacred Body exists in Heaven, perfect, entire, and wanting in nothing, and by virtue of the words of consecration the bread resting on the altar is changed, *not into a new Body*, but into that very pre-existing Body.

III. The Body into which the substance of bread is changed in the Mass is a glorified Body —a true Body indeed, possessing all its constituent parts and organs, but spiritualised, incorruptible, immortal and glorious. This doctrine refers only to Masses offered up since the time of our Lord's Resurrection.

IV. It is not only present throughout the consecrated Host, but is wholly present in every portion of it.

Let us now make a few remarks upon the second great miracle in connection with the Holy Eucharist, *viz.*, the multiplication of the Real Presence. We must observe, at starting, that the word "multiplication" is to be applied, not to the *Person* of Christ, but to the *Presence* of Christ. If two priests are celebrating Mass at the same moment, one in London and the other in Sydney, what happens when they come to the words of consecration? There is a glorified Body in the London Church, but is there *another* glorified Body in the Sydney Church? No! Not *another*. It is the same sacred Body in both places. And so,

in every tabernacle in Europe, Asia, Africa and America, there is present the *one and only Body* of Jesus Christ. Hence it is not our Lord's Body that is multiplied, but merely the presence of that one Body in ten thousand times ten thousand places. And just as Christ foreshadowed the mystery of Transubstantiation, by changing water into wine, so did He also foreshadow the multiplication of His Sacramental Presence by the multiplication of the loaves and fishes in the desert.

Let us, for a moment, consider that incident in our Lord's life. We are told in the fourteenth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel that a great multitude followed our Lord into the desert, and He had compassion on and healed their sick; and, " When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying : This is a desert place, and the hour is now past : send away the multitudes, that, going into the towns, they may buy themselves food. But Jesus said, They have no need to go : give you them to eat. They answered Him : We have here but five loaves and two fishes. . . . And when He had commanded the multitude to sit down upon the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven He blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did *all* eat, and were filled. And they took up what remained, twelve full baskets of fragments. And the number of them that did eat was five thousand *men*, besides women and children."

Now, observe here that Jesus Christ fed five thousand men, not counting women and children. How many women and children there were is not stated, but probably they were present in larger

numbers than the men. Even if we put them down as only a corresponding number, *viz.*, five thousand women and five thousand children, that would bring up the total to fifteen thousand. Yet they were all fed, and fed so well that when they had finished twelve baskets full of fragments remained. But *how* did Jesus Christ manage to feed so many? He might have done it in one of two ways: (1) He might have distributed the five loaves, and then have created some thousands of other loaves, so that each man, woman and child should be provided with a loaf; or (2) He might, without creating a single new loaf, have caused the five loaves to be miraculously present in many places. Had He adopted the first method and created fresh loaves, He would, indeed, have wrought a great miracle; but that would not have been "feeding the multitude with *five* loaves," but with five *plus* the thousands just created. A great miracle would have been worked, but an entirely different miracle.

Now, the Scripture represents our Lord feeding the multitude with only five loaves. St. John even, speaking of the fragments which remained over when all had had their fill, distinctly says that they "filled twelve baskets with the fragments" (not of so many thousand loaves), but "of the *five* barley loaves" (John vi. 13). Thus it is clear that Jesus Christ multiplied not the *five* barley loaves, but the presence of these loaves, so that each loaf must have been at one and the same time in the hands of several, and must have been eaten and digested at the same time by a considerable number. In fact, just as at Holy Communion, many persons receive the self-same Body of Jesus Christ (though the accidents of each separate

particle are distinct), so on that wonderful occasion many persons received the self-same loaf.

How is it possible to render the same substance present in many distant places at the same moment? Well, if we knew more about the nature of substance—if it were something familiar to us—we might possibly discover some satisfying answer. Since, however, as we have already pointed out, we have never seen, nor felt, nor touched, nor come in direct communication with any substance whatsoever, since no man has ever seen or known substance, it is hardly to be wondered at that we cannot explain the prodigy.

It is a mystery, but it is by no means the *only* mystery. Is not life itself a mystery? Are not birth, and death, and sensation mysteries? To deny a thing merely because it is mysterious, is to deny half the facts of history and science. We have God's authority for it, and the clear and express declaration of His infallible Church, and that is enough.

Now, what does the Church teach? She teaches that Jesus Christ is truly and really and substantially present wherever the Blessed Sacrament is received; wherever Mass is said, and wherever Holy Communion is given. Consequently, if a hundred persons go to Holy Communion at the same time, it follows that the sacred Body of Christ rests upon one hundred different tongues, and is present in one hundred different places. Each communicant receives, not a portion only, but the entire Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ. It is not that there are one hundred sacred bodies, certainly not; there is but one Body of Jesus Christ; but that one Body is in one hundred different places, and has been given to one hundred

different people, and each receives as all, and all as each. Though God gives all He has and is, yet He is none the poorer; and though He were to give to a single individual what He gives to the thousand, the individual receives no more than before.

Let us try to illustrate this in some way. The Scripture itself seems to suggest an illustration. It often speaks of our Lord as the *Word* of the Father; *e.g.*, *Verbum caro factum est;* the Word was made Flesh. But let us take an ordinary word—a human word. Consider what an illustration it affords us. I utter a word, and at once that word is intimately present with each one who hears it. That word in its entirety penetrates into every ear that is open to sound. If but one person be present, he receives the word in its entirety. If five hundred or a thousand persons be present, each individual of that multitude receives the same word in its entirety. No one receives more than another; each has what the other has; no more, no less. But a single word has been uttered. It has been uttered but once, and yet all have received it; not merely a "similar" or "equivalent" word, but the *self-same;* and whether the audience be many or few it makes not the slightest difference; the *single* word issuing out of my mouth reaches with equal completeness, unbroken and undivided, every-one present. A beautiful image, surely, of the Word of God, the Eternal Word made flesh, produced by the Father by an eternal generation, entering into the soul of every communicant.

We may still further illustrate the Catholic doctrine by pointing out another name given to Jesus Christ. He is spoken of as the Wisdom of the Father; or, again, as the Truth. Indeed it

is thus that Jesus Christ speaks of Himself. "I am the way, the *truth* and the life." Suppose a man acquire a knowledge of certain truths. Suppose, *e.g.*, he has travelled into some foreign land; he comes home; he writes a book; he gets fifty thousand copies printed; he gives a copy to fifty thousand different people. Now, in a book we have two totally distinct things—in the first place, we have the story, the narrative, the facts recounted, which I will call the truth of the book; and, in the second place, we have the paper, the leaves, the type, the letterpress, the punctuation, which do not indeed constitute the truth, but which are merely the channel by which the truth is conveyed to us. The first I call the substance of the book; the latter I call the accidents. Put these fifty thousand copies of the book into the hands of fifty thousand different men. What is the result? Well, the result is, that each man possesses (1) the *entire* truth, and (2) the *exact* truth, and (3) the *same* truth. The accidents may be different in each, but the substance is the same; and not only similar, but identical. Each book may vary in size, weight, type, paper, material, binding, and so forth.

It makes no difference. There is not one truth in one volume and another in another, but the same truth is present wherever there is a copy of the book; and if there be fifty thousand copies, then the same truth, whole and entire and identical, is equally present in fifty thousand different places. And further, whether a man receive but one copy, or whether he receive fifty copies, or even the whole edition of fifty thousand volumes, he will have the same truth, neither more nor less than if he had received but *one*.

So in the Blessed Sacrament, if one hundred particles are consecrated, the incarnate Wisdom of God is present under each, just as the wisdom of any author is present in each of a hundred volumes. Again, as the shape and form of the pages and letters—whether large or small, Roman or Gothic—are merely *accidental* differences, and just as the same truth is equally present whether in small type or large type, so the same Jesus Christ is equally present whether the accidents of the Host, *i.e.*, the shape, colour and size, be the same or different. This is, of course, only an analogy ; a mere illustration, and not to be pressed too far ; for whereas in a book the truth is merely expressed by signs, in the Blessed Sacrament the Eternal Truth, *i.e.*, the infinite God, is substantially present in His human and Divine nature.

Many heretics not only deny this to be the case, but (what is a totally different thing) they deny even its possibility, for they deny that any substance can be present in more than one place at the same time. Yet such an objection cannot be seriously maintained, even by Protestants. They may deny the *truth* of the multiplication of Christ's presence, just as they deny the infallibility of the Pope, and other Catholic doctrines, but they cannot deny its *possibility* without stultifying themselves, since they do admit the principle in the case of other substances ; *e.g.*, they admit that God is everywhere, and wholly, substantially, and personally present in every place. God is here. God is there. God is within the Church, and without the Church ; He is on land and sea, and in the most distant stars, substantially and personally present. " If I ascend into Heaven, He is there ; if I descend into hell, He

is there." Yet not divided—not, as the ocean in its bed, *in part* here, and in part there, but wholly everywhere. It is one and the same God who is here, and who is there. If then God can be wholly present in every place, why may not His sacred humanity be present at least in many places?

It may be urged, God is the Uncreated, and the humanity of Jesus Christ is created. Well, then, let us take a created object, *viz.*, the soul of man. What do philosophers and metaphysicians teach regarding the soul? They tell us that the soul has no extension, no parts beyond parts; and yet, that it is present throughout the whole of the sensitive body. For instance, they assure me that my soul is wholly in my right arm, and wholly in my left; wholly in my brain, and wholly in my heart; consequently the same indivisible soul is present in many different places at the same moment: not merely by its effects, but substantially present.

This is a doctrine taught by the greatest and profoundest of metaphysicians: not only by Catholics, observe; not only by such intellectual giants as St. Augustine, St. Thomas, and Suarez and De Lugo, and others, but by Protestants, and even pagans.

Aristotle, the disciple of Plato, who flourished more than three hundred years before Christ, taught that the soul is "all in the whole body, and all in every part"; and he (though a pagan) is reputed as the greatest philosopher that ever lived. There is, therefore, evidently nothing repugnant in itself to a substance being in more than one place at once. Protestant philosophers say the same; thus the Scotch Presbyterian Hamilton writes: "The supposition that the soul (or the

mind, as he calls it) is really present wherever we are conscious that it acts—in other words, the peripatetic aphorism—the soul is all in the whole and all in every part—is more philosophical, and consequently more probable, than any other opinion," and "we have no right to say it is limited to any one part of the organism."[1]

Now, if Protestants, and even the very pagans admit that the soul, not merely may be, but actually is, present in many places at once, *e.g.*, in one's eyes when one sees, in one's ears when one hears, in one's tongue when one speaks, and so of every other part of the human body, and not *partly* in one place, and *partly* in another (for the soul is a simple substance, *without parts*), but wholly in each; the principle that a substance may co-exist at one and the same moment in different places is clearly conceded. And if the substance of the soul, why not the substance of the human nature of Christ?

As to explaining "how." Well, it will be time enough to explain how *Christ* is present in many places at once, when philosophers have made it clear how the *soul* may be, and is at this moment in many different places at once. One thing is abundantly proved, *viz.*, that nothing in the doctrines of the Church, however wonderful, is contrary to reason. Many things are beyond and above the reach of man's unaided reason; but no one can show that the Church teaches anything whatsoever in contradiction with it.

[1] Hamilton, vol. ii., pp. 127, 128.

CHAPTER III.

THE SHADOW OF SIN, OR THE REASONABLENESS OF THE DOCTRINE OF PURGATORY.

When a mariner has lost his chart and compass, and finds himself the sport of wind and wave, he is glad to direct his bark across the troubled waters by the faint and flickering gleam of the distant stars; so, too, men who have lost the Faith, and who know nothing of the infallible authority of the Church, are glad to appeal to mere human reason to pilot them over the dangerous and turgid ocean of life.

Indeed, a non-Catholic possesses no other authority to which he can appeal; and is therefore perfectly justified in satisfying himself of the Church's claims before submitting to her teaching. But when once he *has* satisfied himself of her claims, when once he is reasonably convinced of her Divine commission to teach all nations, from that moment reason ceases to be the supreme arbiter of right and wrong, of truth and falsehood, of justice and injustice. He possesses a surer, a higher, a more trustworthy guide. One whose voice is infallible, and whose words, though uttered in human accents, are no other than the words of God Himself. "Who heareth you, heareth Me, and who despiseth you, despiseth Me."

One who believes a doctrine merely because it

is reasonable, because it satisfies his mind, or because it sounds plausible, may be a most excellent Protestant, and may act fully up to the principle of private judgment, but he is no Catholic. The faith of a Catholic rests upon much higher grounds than mere reason. Whatever the Church teaches will of course be reasonable because it is true, but whereas with a Catholic a doctrine is *reasonable because it is true*, with a Protestant *it is true because it is reasonable.* As an instance in point we may refer to the doctrine of Purgatory. Though it has been scoffed at, and derided, and turned out of doors, and misrepresented and caricatured, we know it to be true, because we have the Church's warrant for it, and the Church is " the pillar and ground of truth." But, on the other hand, if it be true it must of necessity be reasonable likewise ; and the task before us now is to make this fact clear—to show, even according to unaided human reason and common sense, that it is a necessary postulate ; that, in short, to deny Purgatory is impossible, without doing violence to reason.

I. If we look out upon the world and examine the lives of different men from a moral point of view, we shall find that they fall naturally into three distinct groups. The first is but a small one. It consists of those highly-favoured souls, few and rare, who spring up perfect creations of Divine grace and power ; souls around whom an altogether special providence seems to keep guard : whom God never seems to let out of His hands, even for an instant ; but whom He shields from every danger, and saves from every fall : souls indeed who almost seem out of place in this dark, sinful, woe-begotten world of ours, so pure, so spotless

and so unspeakably bright do they appear! They are, as it were, the picked fruit, the choice specimens of earth, made, one might almost fancy, for the express purpose of exhibiting the power and omnipotence of God's protective love and fostering care. Such was St. John the Baptist, sanctified in his mother's womb; and St. John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and who laid his head on his Master's breast; such also was the chaste and gentle St. Joseph, the foster-father of Christ; and such, above all and before all and beyond all, was the Virgin immaculate and all pure, whose very name carries with it an aroma of sweetness and perfection, inspiring joy and gladness. Souls upon whom the shadow of sin has never fallen; who were ever faithful to the promptings of grace and loyal to God; who grew in years only to grow in sanctity and perfection. These form the first division of the human family. What becomes of them? Where is their dwelling-place and their home? Ah! with them to die is to go to God. To die is to be set free. Death is but the passage from earth to Heaven: but the rending of the veil that shuts out the beauteous vision of eternal peace. No earthly tie detains them, no human bond holds them back. The hour of their demise registers the hour of their triumph: they quit the earth only to enter at once into the joy of the Lord. Or rather, they had never *really* been parted from God. All their lives long they had been nestling on His breast, and reposing securely in His arms, and death to them was only as the gentle shock with which we awaken a sleeping child—they opened their eyes only to gaze entranced and enraptured full on the beauteous face of Him they loved.

II. Then there is another class who form a marked contrast to these. A class consisting of men without religion and without love: men who make up what the Scripture calls the "World," when it says, "The world is the enemy of God. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," etc. These are persons who may be honoured, esteemed, and made much of by men. They may dwell in rich houses and sumptuous palaces, and may have many friends and a wide acquaintance and considerable influence; they may be well spoken of, and flattered and sought after, but their souls are steeped in iniquity. Men who know not God, and do not care to know Him, but who pass their lives in sin, and spend their years in forging for themselves chains which eternity will not wear through, and fetters which will hold them fast in the dungeons of hell for ever.

Those who die at enmity with God, who depart hence with mortal sin in their heart, unrepented and unconfessed, sink at once into the lake of fire, to begin a term of suffering which knows no end; and to be living witnesses throughout all future ages to God's irresistible power and His undying hatred of sin.

Were these two the only classes there would be little difficulty in dispensing with a Purgatory. Just as the first class of mankind that we have considered rise at once to Heaven, so this last sink at once to hell. There is no difficulty so far.

III. But, in addition to the absolutely spotless and the manifestly reprobate, is there not another and a larger body of Christians who can be classed under neither of these categories? Who have neither the perfection of the first nor the diabolical wickedness of the last. Persons who are neither

strikingly virtuous nor strikingly vicious, who do not arrest our attention or make us pause to marvel either at their piety on the one hand, or their depravity on the other. Men of ordinary virtue; of decent, regular lives; honest, sober, truthful, modest; men who have their faults and their failings, and who are striving with a greater or less earnestness against them; men who fall, and perhaps occasionally fall grievously, but who struggle up again, repent, and go on their way resolved to do better. What is to become of such as these when they come to die? Suppose death were suddenly to overtake them, into what invisible region would their souls wing their flight? Would they ascend at once, all stained and bespattered with the slime of earthly imperfection, into the very bosom of God? or must we perforce consign them straight away to the land of eternal darkness and to the pool of quenchless fire? Is there no third alternative? According to the popular Protestant teaching there is not.

We will take a typical case. Suppose a man living in the great dreary city of London, or Liverpool, or Manchester—a married man of mature age. He is a lawyer, or a doctor, or a man of business. He spends the greater part of the day in the exercise of his profession or trade. He enjoys life; he shares its amusements and its recreations; he is respected and trusted, and has many friends. His business will not permit him much time for religious practices, though it must be confessed that he gives less even than he might. He goes to Mass, at least on Sundays, though he studiously avoids the sermon; he says his morning and evening prayers, but he would rather we did not inquire too nicely into the fervour and earnest-

ness that accompany them ; he confesses his sins, but his purposes of amendment are not very firm, and he takes no great trouble to atone for sin by any self-imposed penance.

He has his faults, and he is not altogether unconscious of them ; nay, he regrets them, though he may not make any sustained effort to overcome them. Then he is irritable, or quarrelsome, or harsh to his subordinates, or uncharitable and censorious in his conversation, or he is too unmeasured and unrestrained with his tongue. He falls into many imperfections, he commits many venial sins. Then he is much engrossed with things of time ; much preoccupied with the affairs of daily life. In a word, he is a man of ordinary virtue—one of the masses ; an average Catholic, living for God, but not at all indifferent to the opinions of men ; determined to please God, yet not by any means inclined to despise the favour and the smile of the world ; resolved to walk to God, yet always taking a circuitous route. He is one who dreads mortal sin, and stands in fear of its consequences, but who is not likely to distress himself much about lesser faults.

Such a man is no saint ; indeed, he makes no pretensions to sanctity ; he does not profess to be a model ; he is a traveller wending his way along the dusty road of life ; his feet are bruised with many a stone, and torn and gashed with many a brier. At last he reaches the end of his journey ; sickness comes, and his term of trial is nearly over. He lies on the bed of death, his end approaches ; at last he dies . . . he dies—well, as men generally die—that is to say, *as he lived*. His death is, in fact, what deaths almost invariably are, an abridgment, an epitome of life : it is good, not perfect.

We rejoice that it is no worse, though we might wish it were better : it inspires us with confidence and hope, but it is not the death of a saint. Nor can it be ! The soul does not undergo a sudden transformation during its last hours : there is no sudden leap from a state of incipient love to a state of perfect charity. Imperfections and faults of character, the growth possibly of years, still cling by a thousand invisible tendrils to the soul : nor are they shaken off in a moment. There is no sudden change, or, if there be, the mere approach of death, or the weariness of pain is not enough to produce it. And so his earthly course draws to a close.

Here I have sketched, as though with a few hasty strokes of the pencil, a typical man—one who may be said to represent a considerable number. In fact (if we confine our thoughts to Catholics), it probably covers the majority of cases. We ourselves must surely come under the number, for if we dare not aspire to the innocence of a St. John the Baptist, so neither shall we consent to take our stand among the reprobate. Indeed, we may say that this class is made up of myriads ! But now the question arises : What is to become of these myriads ? Where are we to place men such as the one whose character I have roughly drawn ?

Were we Protestants of the ordinary type we should be sorely perplexed, for they permit only Heaven and Hell, and the average Catholic is as little fitted for the one place as for the other. They place us in a most awkward dilemma so long as they allow us but the two alternatives.

Is he then to be borne straight to Heaven, without any previous purification, without any cleansing or preparation ? Is this soul, the abode of a

thousand imperfections and small vices and failings, to take its stand at once among the glorious citizens of the city of God? Is Heaven, the abode of "the just made perfect," to harbour a creature who has that within him which is odious and revolting in the sight of the Most High? that which savours of weakness and infirmity, of disobedience and self-will? Evidently not! The words of the Holy Spirit Himself are eminently explicit upon this point. God declares in unmistakable language, that "nothing defiled shall enter Heaven."[1] *Nothing* defiled. No! not a stain or a blot, be it but of a sin of thought, or a hasty word, however passing, however momentary; if but a particle of earthly dust or defilement still adhere to the soul, it may not, it cannot enter.

However slight the defilement may be, it holds it back; it stands as a lion in its path: it rises up before it as a wall of brass; it checks its passage like a deep angry torrent roaring defiance as it rushes down its rocky bed. Though the soul presses forward, though it trembles in its love and eager haste to fling itself into the arms of God—yea! though it would die of very anguish, were it mortal, to find itself thrust back, and impeded from plunging and losing itself in the ocean of God's inexpressible delights. It is, nevertheless, withheld by its sins—possibly by a single sin, and that a small, a light, a trifling one. How the soul is wrung with anguish; how its heart is pierced with pain; how its whole mind and innermost being is burning and writhing in the flames of unsatisfied desires, to be united with the one supreme end for which it was created—for God, whose inexpressible Beauty and infinite Love it is begin-

[1] Apoc. xxi. 27.

ning, for the first time, to know something about. But no! It cannot enter yet. It is still a debtor to God's justice, and it may not go from hence till it has satisfied its entire debt. "Amen, amen, I say to you; you shall not go out from hence until you have paid the last farthing."

No; as a venial offence, *i.e.*, a little impatience, kept Moses from the promised land, so will any small fault debar a soul from Heaven. Nothing else could check Moses, the great leader of God's people; nothing but sin could prevail over him, or detain him on his way. He prevailed triumphantly over all other obstacles. The long journey, the arid desert, the fiery serpents could not hinder his onward march. Even the sea itself—the great sea before which the mightiest pause and rein up—receded at his approach, and stood up like a wall on either side to let him pass. Yet he, whom neither Pharaoh, nor his army, nor the arid desert, nor the deep sea, could stay in his onward course, was held fast and kept in bondage by a single venial fault, and prevented from entering the promised land.

And so it is with the Eden of the future, the Heaven above, the least offence will check our immediate entry.

No one, who reflects upon what Heaven is, would allow for a moment that an ordinary average Christian can enter at once into its possession. For what *is* Heaven in its essence and substance? What constitutes the ecstatic joys of Heaven? What do we mean by Heaven?

Heaven is the inseparable union of God the infinite Creator with man, His fragile and lowly creature. It is the union between God and the soul. A union so close and intimate that the

world has nothing to which we can compare it. It is without example and without parallel: unique and *sui generis*—(*a*) the soul loses itself in God without forfeiting its identity; (*b*) it becomes all God-like and Divine without ceasing to be human; (*c*) it shares in the knowledge and the power and the beauty and the holiness of God, and is made in a wholly inexpressible and sublime sense "a participator in the Divine nature," to use the bold expression of the Apostle. What this union is we can neither imagine nor describe. "Eye hath not seen it, ear hath not heard it, the heart cannot fathom it, words cannot picture it, the mind cannot conceive it." All we know is, that in it consists the essential bliss of Heaven, a bliss so excessive, so overpowering, that without it all other joys are empty, illusory and unsatisfying.

Now, who will dare to say that God would so unite with Himself any soul not perfectly spotless? Who will assert that Infinite Purity and Holiness would extend His arms and draw to His side, and press to His bosom, aught that is defiled or stained, or sinful, or impure? He knows little of God, who imagines that there can be any such union between light and darkness, between truth and falsehood, beauty and deformity. No! whatever else may be said of such imperfect and sin-stained souls, one thing at least is clear and patent and beyond dispute, and that is, till cleansed they can never enter Heaven; never lose themselves in God, or enjoy the society of the saints. Never while God continues to be what He is; never while He is the infinite Sanctity and the uncreated Goodness.

Then, must we say that all these souls are to be condemned to the quenchless flames of Hell? Are all but the very highest of the canonised saints to

pass their eternity in the prison-house of God's wrath? Are the ordinary painstaking, honest, God-fearing members of the Church to be eternally lost because they are not heroes of sanctity, and mirrors of innocence and holiness? Are those who fill our churches and frequent the Sacraments and obey, at least in the main, all the Commandments, to be damned? Are all but a solitary saint here and there to be cast away utterly? This would seem to be the logical consequence if we accept the teaching of those who deny Purgatory. This is the awful conclusion to which a rejection of Purgatory must inevitably lead us. For reason itself rebels at the notion of the imperfect being admitted to the embraces of God; our whole sense of God's inaccessible purity and holiness is shocked at the very suggestion of such a union. We may not, we cannot entertain it: the notion is insupportable. So that *if* Hell be the only alternative, to Hell they must go: if the bottomless pit be the only other abode, *then* that must be their dwelling-place for ever and ever.

Ah! what a doctrine! A doctrine to freeze up the blood in one's veins; a doctrine without reason as it is without love. The fruit of the tree of heresy is indeed bitter; it is as gall and wormwood, and the breath of dragons; it can satisfy neither head nor heart.

How different is the sound Catholic doctrine! It neither outrages God's holiness on the one hand, by sending sinners directly into His presence, nor His mercy, on the other hand, by ejecting them directly into Hell.

It declares that souls who depart this life with the stain of venial sin, or with forgiven mortal sins not fully atoned for, are detained for a season

—for a longer or shorter period—according to their guilt, in the flames of Purgatory, where they are cleansed from every defilement and every spot, and prepared for Heaven. There they suffer the pangs of ungratified desire ; there they are desolate with grief because their sojourn is prolonged ; there they are grievously afflicted because He who is to be their "reward exceeding great" is far from them, and they are shut out and deprived for a time of their inheritance and portion in the land of the living. They thirst after Him whom their souls love, as the parched land thirsts for the autumn rains ; they long for Him as the weary traveller longs for refreshment and shade ; they pine for His possession as a mother pines for her lost and only son ; they are sick with grief as the bride when the bridegroom tarries. Ah ! who will describe their anguish, who will express their bitterness ? THEIR LOVE IS THE MEASURE OF THEIR DISTRESS ; AND IN SO FAR AS A FINITE NATURE WILL PERMIT, THEIR LOVE IS PROPORTIONED TO ITS OBJECT ; AND ITS OBJECT IS THE INFINITE GOD. God the unlimited, the boundless, the only absolute beauty. To measure their grief, then, we must measure God's loveliness ; to gauge the depth of their pain we must sound the bottomless abyss of God's perfections. But who can do this ? Let it suffice, then, to say that their pains are beyond all computation, and exceed all thought and power of utterance. Such, then, is the doctrine of the Church of Christ.

What a perfect flood of light it casts over the being of God. Into what startling relief it brings out the dazzling brightness of His purity which cannot suffer a sin-stained soul to approach it. How wondrously it reveals His hatred of sin and

His abhorrence of all defilement! How it lights up, in a word, the whole position of God, and points to Him as the centre and circumference, the beginning and end, the Alpha and Omega of all things! All things become desirable or undesirable, pleasant or unpleasant, good or bad, merely as related to Him. His attitude determines and regulates all things, gives to them their fairness and attractions, clothes them with grace and beauty, and makes them what they are.

What is Heaven itself? God securely possessed. What is Hell? God eternally lost. And what is Purgatory? God hidden: hidden for a time, as the sun is hidden by the passing clouds. When God is thus hidden, then the soul is deprived of light and warmth and beauty and comeliness, as the earth is deprived of beauty when night lies thick over mountain, plain and valley.

We may aid our suffering brethren by our prayers and sacrifices. These imprisoned souls are no strangers to us, but most dear and honoured friends. Heresy, thank God, has built up no impassable barrier between *us* and those we once knew and loved, and who have now passed away. They are still our friends, yea, more our friends than ever, and we may still extend towards them a helping hand in the hour of their trial. Let us hearken to their cry, "have pity on me, at least you my friends," and do our best to succour them.

CHAPTER IV.

"LANGUISHING FOR LOVE," OR THE PAINS OF PURGATORY.

"Where there is some order there is some good, but where there is no order there is no good."—ST. AUGUSTINE, *De natura Borri*, c. 23.

SORROW and joy, pleasure and pain, smiles and tears—such form the texture of every human life. But what is joy and what is sorrow? Who will explain either happiness or grief? At bottom no one can say what they are. Like sensation and consciousness, they are primary facts, not to be explained, but only experienced and accepted. Any attempt at an exhaustive analysis can only end in darkness and obscurity.

All we are able to do is to point to their source. Happiness is the music of the soul, and springs from harmony. It is the result of order, as unhappiness is the result of disorder.

God has created all things in "order, weight and measure." He has established every being according to a definite plan and proportion; and all things stand in a certain well-defined relation to each other as well as to Himself. So long as these relations are duly preserved, peace and happiness ensue; when they are disturbed, happiness and peace give place to pain and anguish.

The greater the disturbance, of course, the more acute will be the pain : its climax is reached when the disturbance comes to affect and interfere with that highest of all relations of which a rational creature is capable ; the relation between himself and God.

The soul is made for God. Not merely in the sense that all things whatsoever are made for Him, but in an immeasurably higher and stricter sense. It is made to know Him even as it is known ; to love Him with a love which is only less than infinite ; to possess and enjoy Him as its supreme, absolute and final end. This is the design of God in creating the soul of man ; and the order He has established. As its complete accomplishment and realisation constitutes perfect and ineffable happiness, so, on the other hand, any departure from it engenders an agony, when understood, worse than death.

Hence it follows : to speak of Heaven, Hell or Purgatory is but to speak of the relation of the soul and God, according as it is (1) in harmony, (2) out of harmony, or (3) temporarily disturbed.

Heaven is nothing more than the Creator and the creature, God and the soul, eternally united in their true relations. Hell is nothing more essentially than God and the soul eternally severed ; *i.e.*, their true relations irrevocably broken. And Purgatory is merely this union between God and the soul temporarily checked. Hence, Heaven is the state of eternal peace, tranquillity and order. Hell, on the contrary, is, in the words of the Holy Ghost, that "land of misery and darkness where the shadow of death, and *no order*, but everlasting horror dwelleth" (Job x. 22). And Purgatory is that place where disorder—not yet beyond remedy

—is being gradually and painfully restored, and the proper relations adjusted; that place, in a word, where the soul has not yet actually found God, but is seeking Him; where some obstacle, some sin, imperfection, or moral defilement has arisen like an obstruction between the soul and God for whom it is made.

Since the soul is made for God, any obstacle to this union does violence to its inmost nature, and sets up a sense of agony within it, beyond the power of language to express.

Material objects and sensible things can indeed offer us but weak and unworthy analogies, but some shadow of the truth can be learned even from them. Consider pain in the body. Whence comes it? From some departure from the harmony pre-established by the Author of nature.

A dislocated bone is one which is out of place and moves not in its proper socket. It is a thing out of order. Pain ensues. Or to take another instance; a nerve becomes exposed: its natural defence, its protecting envelope, has been worn through. A fierce throbbing agony is the immediate consequence. It is nature's cry for the restoration of order. Or a grain of sand, a wandering mote, or some particle of foreign matter gets lodged between the eye and its lid, and again nature suffers because order is outraged. Take a last instance, *e.g.*, thirst. Thirst, when protracted, produces the most painful sensations. To what are they due? Merely to the absence of the moisture which the system, by its nature, requires. At first the agony is less intolerable, because there is not as yet complete absence. Some moisture still softens the glands and throat; but in proportion as even that is withdrawn by evaporation, the

agony grows more and more unendurable, till at last madness comes on, and finally the longed-for relief of death.

The law is inexorable. Every departure from the harmony established is visited with its proportionate punishment. It is observable in the relations that exist between the limbs, muscles and other parts of our complicated bodies. But all such relations are trivial and unimportant when compared with the relation subsisting between the strong immortal soul and the eternal and infinite God. As that is a relation, unique, unparalleled, and *sui generis*, so, too, any disturbance of it gives rise to a pain as unique, as unparalleled and as essentially *sui generis*.

Reflect on the nature of the soul. Consider, on the one hand, its vast capacities, its unbounded powers of love, its everlasting life, its endless yearnings, its insatiable thirst, which creatures can indeed provoke, but never appease. On the other hand, contemplate God ; His infinite beauty ; His uncreated loveliness ; His eternal truth ; Him, for whom alone the soul is made ; who alone can fill it, satisfy it, and inundate it ; and then judge of the agony it must suffer if hindered or checked in its search after Him.

To what can we compare a soul so situated ? Nature can scarcely furnish us with an illustration. Perhaps we may liken it to the meteors or " falling stars," as they are popularly called, which fall within our atmosphere. A meteoric body flying through space is, in virtue of the law of gravity imposed by God, attracted by the earth. It obeys this law, and rushes towards the earth at a terrific rate—astronomers reckon it at over thirty miles a second ! It thus precipitates itself upon the earth

practically unimpeded till it enters the atmosphere surrounding our little planet. The atmosphere then checks its motion, acting upon it as a brake; the friction thus produced raises the meteoric body to an intense heat. It burns, melts, vaporises, dissolves, because its passage is retarded. It glows at a white heat, grows incandescent, and at last becomes consumed by fire, on the one hand, because of the impetuosity of its flight towards the earth; and on the other hand, because that flight is partially arrested and retarded by the atmosphere. Did it seek the earth less ardently, or were there no atmosphere to interfere with its approach, it would not burn and glow so fiercely!

What a beautiful figure this is of the soul consuming with desire in the flames of Purgatory.

So soon as the soul has shuffled off its mortal coil, it finds itself, so to speak, within the circle of God's attraction. It is impelled towards Him with the utmost violence as the meteor is impelled towards the earth. What now happens? There may be no grievous sin to raise an impenetrable obstacle—a wall of brass—between it and God. Nevertheless, if there be but venial sins, or but the slightest failing, but imperfections light as air, they will act upon it as the atmosphere upon the meteor —*i.e.*, check it, retard it, impede and interfere with its union with God, till in its anguish the soul burns and wastes away with unsatisfied desires until every trace of sin is at last purged out.

The violence with which God draws the soul to Himself is not merely different in kind, being spiritual instead of material, it is also different in degree, being, on the part of God, infinite. It would be infinite actually but for the limitation of the crea-

ture. This secret of attraction, exercised by God over His reasonable creatures, resides in His perfections, which are without bound or limit. Without enumerating all the different perfections in which, for the sake of greater clearness, we are accustomed to divide the objectively indivisible perfection of God, we may find profit and instruction in dwelling for a few moments on the two which chiefly affect us, *viz.*, Beauty and Truth. They are the complements of our soul's twofold powers, mind and will. It is under the aspect of Infinite Truth that God fills, floods and overflows the intellect, ever pining for knowledge ; and under the aspect of Infinite Beauty He entrances, captivates and enthrals the heart or the will, ever pining and languishing for love. "*Amore langueo*" (Cant. of Cants. ii. 5).

Of all powers, beauty—for beauty is a power—is the most mysterious, the most irresistible and the most subduing and fascinating. It conquers, but conquers without harshness, or violence, or pain. Its victories are all bloodless and peaceful. They provoke no resentment from the conquered. This is so because love does not seize and strain the body or afflict the limbs or the senses, mere servants of the will, but because it wins over the will itself, the master of the little microcosm, and when the will is gained, it carries all else with it, as the queen bee carries the swarm.

How little can a child, born and educated in some dark prison, know of the glory of the sun, either in the splendour of its rising or in the magnificence and lustre of its setting, or in its noonday brightness when the arching heavens seem all ablaze and on fire—a child who has never seen but the one subdued ray that pierces dimly through

the chink in his dungeon wall—yet he knows far more of the beauty of the sun than ever living man can know of the beauty of God.

Of the ruder forms and grosser manifestations of mere material beauty, we may know something. We have, on the tropical sea, felt the beauty of the dawn of day ; we have experienced the magical influence of the cloudless summer night ; we have felt the spell of the sparkling waves and the scented air ; and our heart has dilated and welled over at the beauty that love can trace in the welcome smile of some dear friend, met after years of troubled severance. Of created beauty we may speak, though even then in a subdued tone, but of God's beauty we can say nothing. Words fail us ; and thoughts themselves grow dark. Some few instances seem to throw light on the nature of God's all-winning beauty till we begin to look into them, and then they, too, seem to fail us, and to afford us no solution. St. Peter, standing in the hall of Pilate, and denying with curses and oaths all knowledge of Christ, seemed wrought of iron ; but as iron forgets its stubborn nature and runs like water when the bright flame meets it, so Peter melted and dissolved in tears at the glance, so full of reproachful love, cast on him by Jesus Christ. What a depth of beauty must have beamed in that momentary look ! Yet that was even before His resurrection. So, again, when the three Apostles witnessed the beauty of Christ in His transfiguration, they became, as it were, dazed and stupefied, and would have remained rooted to the spot for ever. The sight seems to have emptied their minds of every earthly image. Forgetting the mission that had been committed to them, and the sternest duties and necessities of life, they

cried out like men bereft of reason: "Let us make three tabernacles: one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias," as though that vision were to be eternal—as though they were to live on for ever and ever gazing on the glorious three. Yet Jesus Christ had not then ascended to the Father, and was still clad in His frail humanity, and did not even then reveal His Divine essence. So also we have innumerable instances in the lives of the saints. To St. Teresa, for example, it was once granted to see in vision merely the sacred Hand of Jesus, her Beloved, and the sight at once threw her into an ecstasy, and caused her to swoon away with transports of joy. That, however, was only a created hand, which God had made His own when He assumed our humanity.

To see God Himself in His own unfading beauty, infinite and uncreated, would wrench the very heart from our bosoms, and enkindle a fire of desire throughout every fibre of our being, more fierce than the sun at noon. It is that, in fact, which must actually take place when a soul enters into Purgatory. The body is as a prison, shutting out the invisible beauty of God from the poor exile upon earth. Then death comes, and God sets the prisoner free. He walks out from darkness into light. And the instant in which the child of the Most High looks up into the face of its heavenly Father, its whole heart aches for Him. If its longing is denied, it suffers purgatorial pains.

A longing—deep, insatiable, impetuous as a torrent, seething as the sea—fills his soul. Yet that longing is denied and thwarted, and the soul is held back by an omnipotent hand. Verily, an omnipotent hand. Nothing, indeed, but omnipotence could check and refrain an impetuosity so

immeasurable, so all but infinite, which sways its whole being, and which will continue to torment it until at last, with boundless joy, it is allowed to plunge and lose itself in the limitless ocean of God's immensity, and to swoon away in eternal transports of joy on the bosom of the Beloved, the centre of its life, the end of its existence.

The very characteristic of beauty is to rejoice and cheer the heart. It is beauty's special prerogative to gladden. It is in itself joy-giving. It seems to feed the soul, to satisfy all its cravings, and to steep it in a sweet forgetfulness of all else. We feel no desire, save one. We ask no favour; we demand no privilege but one alone, and that is to be allowed to stand and admire, and gaze on and on and on for hours, unmindful of the flight of time, and of all things else besides.

> . . . . . A thousand years have passed
> And yet a thousand thousand : years they are
> As men count years, and yet we stand and gaze
> With touching hands, and lips immutable
> As mortals stand a moment . . . . . [1]

If this can ever be the case with any earthly beauty whatsoever, and under any circumstances whatsoever, be they ever so exceptional, what must be the joy and gladness resulting, when the soul opens its eyes upon the uncreated and infinite beauty of God—compared to which all created loveliness is but hideous deformity?

One thing is perfectly clear. If but once opened to the beatific vision, even but for one brief moment, the eyes of the soul can never close again without inexpressible pain. To close them and shut out that vision is agony. Not one instant's enjoy-

[1] *Jephthah, etc.*, by Aleister Crowley, 1899, p. 192.

ment of the sight of God can be forfeited without the acutest suffering. On this earth we may consent to live on without seeing God; but this is solely because we have *never* seen Him. Once see God, then to live any longer without seeing Him is impossible; for such a one all true life has ended. The soul may yet exist—it *must* exist—but it is only in the throes of death. Eternal death is in fact nothing more than the eternal closing of the eyes upon the vision of God. Hence the eternal darkness. Hence, too, the unending death. *Mors depascet eos.*

Such is hell. On the other hand, so long as the eyes may yet hope one day to see, the soul is only in Purgatory. The thought of that longed-for moment sustains it. Yet each successive instant that must first elapse, flows by as an unmeasured sea of bitterness and grief. Yes! for to be restrained when we would feast on the glory of the Infinite is to suffer the pangs of an inconceivable hunger. The pains of sense, even of hell itself, are light and easy to support *compared to that.* Nothing but that seems *quite* unendurable. Ah! God, thou art verily our all. *Deus meus et omnia.* "The first and the last, the beginning and the end, the alpha and the omega." Without Thee, all else is nothing. If Thou smile upon us, our joy overflows and drowns all care and sorrow. Hide Thy countenance for a moment, and we are troubled. Cast us off utterly, and we wither away.

Thus it appears to me that the doctrine of Purgatory, rejected, scorned, derided though it be by heretics, reveals to us much of the grandeur and majesty of God and illuminates in a marvellous manner the hidden depths of His Divine

perfections. It is only because God is so infinitely desirable that His absence is such an inexpressible torture. It is only because joy is so intense in Heaven, that pain is so dire in Purgatory. Were God less attractive, less lovable, less beautiful, the privation of His presence would be less agonising.

However great and intense may be the love which unites us to a human creature, in this world, we can, nevertheless, reconcile ourselves to his momentary absence, without dying of grief. Not so with the love which unites us to God. Not for one single moment can we bear to be parted from Him. No, not to win even a thousand worlds.

Once beyond the grave, and we have done with time. Eternity is ours, and eternity is so long. Is there not, then, we may ask, one brief instant of that endless duration that we shall be willing to spend out of His presence? No; a thousand times, no! emphatically and unhesitatingly, no! Not out of *His*. Out of other's, yes. Out of God's presence never, on any considerations. If every pebble upon every beach were made up of an infinite number of atoms, and if every atom were an eternity, and if all these eternities were at our disposal, we would never consent to spend so much as one second apart from God. Nothing would, or could ever induce a soul that has once seen God face to face, freely to sacrifice a single instant's enjoyment of that vision, were it even for the sake of all the joys, delights, riches and honours of the entire world, though they were to be possessed for ever. This would be to compare a created joy to an uncreated one. But to compare any created joy, or even the sum of all created joys with the joy of gazing upon the King in His beauty, is to institute a comparison where

no comparison is so much as thinkable; between the creature and the Creator of all no comparison exists.

Many persons commend the mercy of God in hiding from our eyes the trials and sufferings that the coming years are destined to unfold to us day by day; but scarcely anyone adverts to God's mercy in keeping from us all power of vivid realisation of the entrancing delights of Heaven. But then men always will halt and fix their gaze upon the less, rather than upon the more marvellous actions of God. To conceal from us the temporal trials of life is no doubt to save us much present sorrow, but to conceal from our view the joys and ecstatic happiness of our eternal home is in sober truth to save us from the pains of hell itself, *viz.*, from the tortures of unsatisfied desires, which no words can describe, or mind conceive.

But, while our pen slips glibly over the paper, hundreds and thousands of our fellow-creatures are actually experiencing those very agonies which we have so vainly attempted to portray. They are learning, in all its awful naked truth, the full significance of that statement so often made, so seldom considered, so constantly repeated, so persistently ignored, *viz.*, that the least deliberate, venial offence, is a greater evil, than all the accumulated miseries and merely temporal misfortunes of the world.

The intrinsic beauty of the Church's doctrines is in all respects most admirable; but in those points where she more conspicuously parts company with the sects, her doctrines have ever struck us as not only beautiful, but as transcendently Divine, and as bearing upon them the seal of infallible truth.

Any (so-called) religious body, rejecting the doctrine of Purgatory, turns out of court one of the most eloquent witnesses to the personal loveliness and perfection of God, and destroys one of the most striking arguments in proof of His infinite sanctity and beauty. This we have striven to make clear in the present chapter, so far as Purgatory is concerned. But it holds good in a greater or less measure of all those other doctrines which are more especially and exclusively Catholic. It holds good of the doctrine of devotion to our Lady; the invocation of saints; the granting of indulgences; the Holy Eucharist; the confessional; the infallibility of the Pope, etc.; though each in a different way, and from a distinct point of view.

A Church that would reject or deny these, stands self-condemned; a severed branch—a withered stem, arid and leafless. "A fixed figure for the hand of scorn to point his slow unmoving finger at."

CHAPTER V.

THE SECRET WORKINGS OF DIVINE GRACE.

How silently all the great forces of nature perform their appointed tasks! With what secrecy they carry out their various and often complicated operations! Consider the morning light. How softly it steals over the eastern mountains, driving before it the restful night, and arousing men to labour and toil; stirring into activity the sleeping cities and towns, and filling the streets and the market-places, the parks and the squares, with their bustling, noisy, restless throngs! Or even if we turn aside from the haunts of men and wander into the deserted woods and forests in the early spring of the year, the same truth forces itself upon the observant mind. How noiselessly the life-giving sap begins to stir in the lifeless trees and in the long, naked stems and branches; how secretly it gathers in the underground roots and suckers, swelling and gaining strength till at last it forces its way beneath the hard, rough bark, pressing up from innumerable invisible capillaries through trunk, and branch, and slenderest twig—yea, to the furthermost extremity of the topmost bough it works its way, carrying life, and vigour, and health, till the unnumbered buds burst forth, and the tender leaves unfold, and the forest be-

comes one vast sea of swaying green and waving branches.

Or consider even our own mysterious corporal life. How unobtrusive and hidden is the process of growth and development of the child into the man! How noiselessly the blood courses along through artery and vein; how secretly it bears nutriment and supplies to every organ; how silently and methodically it builds up molecule by molecule, and fibre by fibre, bone and muscle, and ruddy flesh—imparting vermilion to the lips and bloom to the cheeks, brilliancy to the eye, and strength and vigour to every limb! Yet how silently withal! How stealthily, how modestly is all this change brought about! Who ever stays to consider it? Who pauses to reflect upon it? The work is done in secret and without attracting the least attention or surprise.

If the action of God on material things is so secret and so silent, still more secret and silent is His action on the immaterial souls of men. We think not of it, nor do we pause to reason; but the most marvellous transformations are taking place all the while: transformations in our very soul, compared to which the transformation of the shapeless seed into the graceful and delicately tinted flower, or of the acorn into the majestic oak-tree, is but insignificant.

And is it likely that we, who cannot follow God's hand as it moulds and fashions the simplest material form, should detect His far more subtle and spiritual action upon the immaterial soul of man while He transforms it by His grace? The soul is a spirit, and, consequently, invisible and impervious to the senses. We cannot see it; still less can we watch the action of grace upon

it with our material eyes. No ; " The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation " (St. Luke xvii. 20). Hence, if we are not at pains to learn what the Church teaches on this subject, we shall be in danger of letting life slip away without appreciating the choicest and greatest among the many gifts of God to man—the gifts He bestows upon us in the supernatural order.

Of these the only one we shall now touch upon is grace and some of its more direct consequences. What does Divine grace do for us? When a man is first born into this world he appertains to the order of nature. Then grace comes and takes him, as it were, lovingly in its arms, and elevates him above the natural order on to a higher plane; placing him in the supernatural order—setting him in a position wholly and entirely above his own deserts and natural capacities ; so far above them, indeed, that no power of man or angel, nor of all men and angels combined, could so exalt him, but the power of God alone. This effect is not at once apparent to our dull intellects. It is as hidden as many of the differences existing in nature. Thus between an acorn which drops from an oak-tree, and an acorn which is manufactured by the industry of man—carved from a piece of wood, or formed in a mould—there may not appear externally any very marked distinction. To the eye of a casual observer they will present much the same appearance, and one may easily pass for the other ; but, in reality, what an immeasurable distance divides them.

The one contains a certain hidden virtue which enables it to develop into a superb oak—nay, give it time and it will expand into a forest cover-

ing many a square mile ; but the other, its mere counterfeit, can never develop into anything. Whence this difference? The acorn produced by the oak contains a principle of life ; that which man's cunning hath devised, in rude imitation, is dead and destined only to corruption. This may serve as an illustration of the essential, though invisible, difference between a man in grace and a man devoid of grace. Though externally, and as far as the most careful examination can detect, the two are identical, yet, in reality, they are absolutely unlike. One possesses the principle of an eternal supernatural life ; the other is without any such principle. As in a real acorn we have the promise of a future living oak, but find no such promise in its counterfeit, so, in the baptised child, we have a promise of an eternal life of glory in Heaven, but no such promise in the unbaptised child.

Grace lifts us above nature—above the highest and sublimest nature. Consider for a moment what this means. In the order of creation the angels are above man ; still more raised above him are the archangels ; yet higher still the Thrones, Dominations, Principalities and Powers ; and still more immeasurable does the distance grow as we approach the Cherubim and Seraphim who stand nearest to God ; yet, when God's grace enters into the heart of man it raises him, as though by a single bound, far, far above the highest and sublimest even of the Seraphim and Cherubim, *when considered in their nature alone, and apart from grace.* In fact, the highest angel, considered in his own nature and abstraction made of his supernatural gifts, would be immeasurably and incalculably below the least child on earth, in

whose soul the grace of God resides as a principle of present life and future glory.

In fact, as Fr. Nieremberg, S.J., so forcibly remarks: "If all the perfection, excellence and beauty of all natures, *both existent and possible*, were all collected into one, it were all nothing in comparison of the least particle of grace, which gives a soul pre-eminence above all pre-eminences, and a beauty above all other beauties of nature. There is no resemblance betwixt God and all natural perfection; so he that is endowed with grace exceeds all the good that is found in creatures, for he is in a Divine degree." Hence it follows that "one man alone is more indebted to God for the least degree of grace than all creatures besides (from the Seraphim to the sands of the sea) for the creation of all other natures!" [1]

Indeed, the gift of grace is a far greater gift than that of creation, or, rather, it is like a new creation, but a creation into a higher order. It is literally being "born anew" in a spiritual sense; hence our Lord so speaks of it: "Unless a man be *born again* of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." "Born again." What is the nature of this second birth? As in the first birth we are born children of Adam, so, in the second birth, we are born children of God. Not indeed by nature, but by grace. We become *adopted* children. As Jesus Christ is the natural and true Son of God, so we become sons by adoption; hence St. John says in the Gospel recited at the end of Mass: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not; but as many as received Him, He gave them *power to be made the sons of God*" (St. John i. 11, 12).

[1] See *Adoration in Spirit and Truth*, chap. xii.

This relationship with the Eternal and Omnipotent is an honour and a privilege, not fictitious and fanciful, but most true and well established, carrying with it all the special privileges and advantages of real sonship; such as a claim to the inheritance of sons, and the possession of God's paternal love in all its marvellous manifestations. Indeed it confers upon those who possess it a spiritual rank and dignity which no words can adequately describe, nor tongue utter, nor mind fully conceive. The relationship is indicated in many passages of Holy Scripture, and in various ways. Thus we are taught to address God in the most familiar of all prayers by the title of Father: "Our Father, who art in Heaven." So, again, the Apostle implies the same consoling truth when he speaks of the Incarnate Son of God as "the first-born among many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29).

This brings us to a second startling effect of Divine grace, *viz.*, the fellowship of Christ. By becoming the adopted sons of God we are made brothers of the everlasting Son of the Father—*i.e.*, of Jesus Christ. A relationship quite without a parallel in its condescension, and breathing the most consummate love and affection. A relationship, too, which Jesus Christ, so far from repudiating, has sought still further to accentuate and intensify. He became man and a participator in our human nature so that we might become in a certain sense gods (*Dei estis.* St. John x. 34) and participators in His Divine nature; He took upon Himself the burden of our temporal life that we might one day possess eternal life; He embraced our poverty and miseries that we might one day share in His eternal riches and honours in the

world beyond the grave—in short, there is nothing which He has not done to show all the affection, solicitude and interest of the tenderest of brothers towards each and every one of us. Men of the world are proud of noble ancestry, and exult if they can trace some connection, however remote, fanciful and far-fetched, with royalty; but what is there in all earthly ties compared to the honour of being by grace the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ? All other kinships are forgotten when we think of Him who has chosen to stand towards us in the relationship of a brother. Seeing how men value the tinsel honours and empty privileges that the accidents of birth or fortune confer, it seems a pity that preachers and teachers should not insist more frequently and more earnestly upon the far more inestimable and enduring honours that accrue from the union by grace with Jesus Christ. The secret of sanctifying souls is surely not to ignore the natural desires and aspirations of the heart, but rather to direct them to their true objects and highest ends.

Further, grace makes us living tabernacles of the Holy Ghost. "Know ye not," asks St. Paul, "that you are the temples of the Holy Ghost?" The Holy Spirit enters into possession of the soul when it is filled with grace, and purifies, sanctifies and adorns it by His holy presence; so that regenerated souls may say, in an altogether peculiar sense: "In Him we live, and move, and have our being." And where the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity is, there also must be likewise, by concomitance, the Father and the Son. Hence our Lord says: "If any man love Me, My Father will love him, and We will go to Him, and We will take up our abode with Him." Who can realise

what it is to possess thus within our own souls the adorable Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Ghost? Yet such is the happiness of every creature in a state of grace. God dwells within such a one, not merely by His operation, but substantially: "non per operationem tantum sed etiam per substantiam," as theologians teach. Hence the enormity of any offence committed by a soul in grace becomes intelligible, for such a one "defiles the temple of the Holy Ghost," besides "crucifying to himself the Lord of Glory."

This brings us to those remarkable words of St. Peter—words which no one can meet for the first time without emotion, and which are well calculated to fill any man of vivid faith with a perfect ecstasy of joy and jubilant wonder. In his second Epistle he says: "He hath given us most great and precious promises: that by these you may be made partakers of the Divine nature" (2 Peter i. 4). Partakers of the Divine nature: "divinæ naturæ consortes"—sharers in the nature of God. This sublime doctrine is difficult to understand, and still more difficult to explain. It undoubtedly indicates a most extraordinary and ineffable union between the soul and God. It is not that the soul, or any portion of it, actually becomes God, or loses its personality, or in any way forfeits its identity, but that God Himself enters into its innermost recesses, as it were, residing within it and flooding it with His Divinity, as the daylight floods and fills a clear and transparent crystal. Indeed, this is one of the illustrations actually made use of by the Fathers, so we may pause for a moment to consider it. When a pure crystal is exposed to the sunlight, the rays enter it, fill it, pervade it, and render it all bright,

glittering and luminous. It is not itself the light, but the light is within it and around it, and shines through it, and pervades it in every part, so that we may say that it partakes of the nature of light; so does the Divinity shine through the soul and beautify it, clothing it with something of the beauty and comeliness of God Himself. Another example frequently made use of by the Fathers is that of a piece of metal at a white heat. The metal is metal still, even while it emits light and heat. Its nature is not changed, yet the heat possesses it. It is, as it were, penetrated with fire, and indistinguishable from it. It partakes of the nature of fire. As a piece of molten iron in the midst of the furnace, so is a soul in grace in the midst of God. It borrows beauty and magnificence from the presence of God Himself, so that this beauty and magnificence are the uncreated beauty and magnificence which are "from eternity unto eternity," and not the mere beauty and magnificence of the soul, though it is the soul that reflects them. We say this just as we may say that the beauty of the full moon is the beauty, not, strictly speaking, of the moon, but of the sun, since the moon possesses it *only indirectly and by reflection*. And as different bodies reflect the created light in different degrees, so may we say that different souls reflect in varying measure, according to their degree of grace, the uncreated Light of God, and so "differ from one another, as star differeth from star in glory."

As the incandescent metal may be said "to share in the nature of fire," so the soul is said, in the words of Holy Scripture, to become a sharer or participator in the Divine nature.

These and many other examples are made use

of by the Fathers to illustrate the effects of Divine love on the human soul. Yet, though they may help us in a measure, they all fall far short of the truth, since we can never hope to know all the effects of grace till our eyes are opened in the next world, and we can see God "face to face," and "know Him as we are known."

Let it suffice to say that a soul in grace enjoys the special care and protection of God, who watches over it with more than paternal solicitude, so disposing, indeed, that all things whatsoever, without exception of any kind and whether prosperous or adverse, may be made to contribute to its essential and eternal happiness. In the words of the Holy Ghost, "all things co-operate unto good for such as are to be saved."

Grace furthermore bestows a special knowledge[1] of spiritual things, and a power to discriminate between the precious and the vile—the gifts of heaven and the vanities and baubles of earth. "He that is of God knoweth the things of God." This is shown to demonstration in innumerable examples of saints and heroes, who have testified by their lives and actions how immeasurably they valued the spiritual and supernatural above all the treasures and riches of earth. And if it gives knowledge, so does it impart strength to act up to that knowledge. If we wish to witness the power of grace, and see, as it were, for ourselves the valour and courage it bestows, we have but to turn to the lives of the martyrs and confessors. Consider the constancy with which they went forth to meet death in its most hideous and cruel form, and the calm and peace—nay, the positive joy they exhibited—in the midst of torture and

[1] St. Thomas speaks of grace as "*quædam lux animæ.*"

agony which exceed all words. Not strong men alone, but delicate women, tenderly brought up, sensitive and weak—yea, and children, too, unused to suffering and the sight of blood—stood unconquerable before their tormentors, and could be subdued neither by fire nor sword, nor the worst forms of persecution. The weakest by nature became the strongest by grace, and characters accustomed to shrink from every pain and affliction grew, under its mysterious influence, robust and indifferent to torture and death. The grace of God is above all power, and must triumph over all opposition, if corresponded with, for it is the power of the Omnipotent.

Let us conclude by one last reflection. The grace of God in the soul renders it so near and dear to Him that He views its every action and thought in a wholly special way. God becomes, as it were, enamoured with a soul in grace; He looks down upon it with tenderness, and is wholly conquered by the beauty with which He has decked it, so that not only the soul, but every act of the soul, becomes pleasing and gratifying to Him. The least act, were it but an aspiration, or a kind word, when performed (1) by one in grace and (2) from a supernatural intention, is of greater value, before God, than the greatest and noblest action performed by one in sin, or even by a soul free from sin if devoid of all supernatural grace.[1] All of us have probably sometimes sighed in our childhood for the fabulous philosopher's stone, which is said to possess the property of converting whatever it touches into gold. Far

[1] In the present order of things a human soul "free from sin" yet "devoid of grace" does not, of course, exist. The case is therefore merely hypothetical.

more marvellous is the power actually possessed and exercised by a soul in grace of converting every act it performs into a priceless treasure—into an eternal weight of glory. Yet this we know to be the simple, unvarnished truth taught by the Church.[1] Every pain, cross or affliction, however slight, if borne for the love of God by a soul in grace, is more pleasing to Him, and better in itself, than the conquering of a kingdom or the ruling of an empire, when such acts are not inspired by a supernatural motive. Thus is our future life made dependent on our present. Thus it is that, day by day and week by week, are being wrought within our souls the principles and seeds of future glory and happiness. How silently does the work proceed, and how secretly God operates His wonders. Yet how certainly is His hand ever upon us all our lives long, transforming and beautifying us, if we place no obstacle in the way and resist not His operation !

Who, appreciating this truth, could allow himself to grow remiss or lukewarm in guarding and defending so priceless a treasure ? If men " did but know the gift of God," they would surely take considerably greater pains in securing its preservation, especially considering the fragility of the vessels in which so inestimable a treasure is carried.

Men are always glad to hear of what redounds to their own honour and advantage. Even the most scoffing democrat would possibly think better of crowns and coronets were they placed more within his reach, and so would Christians esteem more highly the supernatural gifts of God, were they made more fully sensible of their actuality,

[1] See Council Trid., Sess. vi., can. 32, and commentators on that canon.

and more fully aware of the power they possess to acquire them in a higher and yet higher degree.

Even among reflecting men, not one in five thousand realises the honour, privilege and dignity that grace confers. We priests, with all our familiarity with theological works and spiritual books, can hardly be said to bring the truth home to ourselves. But if this be true of those whose very profession supposes greater knowledge, what shall we say of the masses of the faithful? What of the multitudes whose lives are passed in work and toil and bitter privation? Is it not our duty to point out oftener than we do those truths which are joy-giving and sustaining—truths which cause the heart to bound with delight and the spirit to rise in wonder and gladness, even in the midst of earthly sorrows?

The anger of God upon unrepenting sinners is a familiar theme with most preachers, and the pains and penalties of the lost are often depicted with considerable warmth and vividness. But the more attractive truths of the gospel—those truths which melt the hearts of men rather than break them—are seldom put so prominently forward, and make but little impression. As none need the solace that these truths bring as much as the sorrow-laden and the miserable, so, when duly represented, none grasp at them more readily or embrace them more eagerly.

The heart is made for happiness and joy. The more completely, therefore, earthly consolations are withheld and denied, the more readily will it accept and treasure up the promise of a joyous hereafter, and the more fervently will it cherish that inward and invisible grace which is, as it were, an earnest of an eternity of peace and delight in the Kingdom of the Father.

CHAPTER VI.

UNION WITH GOD.

THE smallest trivialities suffice to amuse and entertain a child, because its mind is too feeble and undeveloped to grasp the great questions that are ever agitating the world. A rattle or a penny trumpet will absorb its entire attention, and it will be quite content to while away its time digging in the sand with a wooden spade, or erecting imaginary castles and palaces with packs of cards. One may speak to it of bloody encounters actually taking place on land and sea ; one may apprise it of events entailing the ruin of nations or the disgrace of peoples ; one may describe the disintegration or total destruction of an empire ; but it signifies little. So long as one does not seize its playthings, nor shatter its toy-house, one will scarcely trouble the infant, or even chase away the smile of joy from its face. It will continue its play with undistracted glee. The grown-up man, on the contrary, can no longer find any pleasure or interest in the playthings of a child. His mind is too full of wider, deeper and more momentous thoughts—involving, perhaps, the welfare of his country or the peace of the world.

Now, from a spiritual point of view, the great masses of mankind closely resemble children playing upon the sand. They, too, occupy themselves in trivialities. All their thoughts, all their desires,

are centred on the passing and unstable things of time. Some deliver themselves up, body and soul, to money-making, and are wholly preoccupied in adding field to field and house to house, much as the child collects shells, or throws up mounds of sand, to be scattered by the fast incoming tide. Others engage themselves in seeking honours, distinctions and decorations, and will lend an eager ear to the praise and flattery of men, with the same self-satisfied contentment with which a child will allow itself to be beguiled by the sound of a rattle, or the hum of a top.

The world, the pleasures of the world, the riches of the world, the honour, the distinctions, the glory, and the approbation of the world—such things gain possession of the hearts of the multitude. Perishable goods, fleeting pleasures, transitory fame! The glitter and the glare, the gilt and the tinsel, the meteoric splendours and phosphorescent glory of the vain frivolous world engross them, occupy them, interest them, excite them, control them, tyrannise over them, provoke their passions, stimulate their greed, arouse their desires, and drive them to the very ends of the earth in hot eager pursuit of fleeting shadows and bursting bubbles!

Children, every one! Infants playing with their toys—foolish, unreflecting, unreasoning—ready to start off in pursuit of every painted butterfly that chance sends fluttering and flittering across their sunlit path—children who refuse to be distracted or disturbed by anything of true importance. The deepest problems of life, the momentous questions of a future state, the solemn and all-important facts of the eternal and invisible world, awake no interest. Speak in the most persuasive tones of the

most sublime and awful truths that can occupy the heart of man ; of crimes that will re-echo through endless ages ; of wounds which eternity itself cannot heal; of millions upon millions of sensitive human beings descending into the inextinguishable lake of fire ; of a heaven to be won, and a hell to be avoided —yes, speak on ; " cry, cease not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet " ; and, behold, they still play on with the gewgaws and trumperies of life, as deaf and as unheeding as plays the unreasoning child when you tell him that cities burn and nations perish.

To a man of vivid faith there is nothing so extraordinary or so appalling as the apathy, indifference and insensibility of worldly-minded men to all that is most vital and significant, most essential and paramount. The saints of God, though in many respects like to us, and moulded out of the same clay, seemed to live and move in a wholly different world. They looked beyond the present into the far-off future. The riches and honours and glory of the world were, no doubt, spread out and flaunted before *them* as before us. These things they indeed beheld, as they beheld the crimson and golden clouds floating in the western sky—beautiful, if you will—yea, gorgeous beyond all comparison ; but perishable and passing, and unworthy of more than a momentary glance. Such coveted objects came to tempt the saints as they come to tempt others, but in their case without success. They heeded them not, but brushed them aside without a sigh. Their thoughts were too much taken up with more important matters to heed such puerile distractions—too much preoccupied with great and eternal truths ; with heaven and its unfading glory, its never-ending

delights, its enduring and ineffable peace ; with hell and its quenchless fires, its undying worm of remorse, its ceaseless, changeless, pitiless woe and misery. How could a saint become captivated or ensnared by earthly joys whose eyes were ever riveted on joys celestial ? How could he be terrorised or coerced by thought of earthly pains or worldly shame, or in any way swayed by the scorn or hate of men, whose mind was ever contemplating the terrors of the lost, and the shame and torments and never-ending despair of the stygian pit ? No. The earth beneath his feet must ever remain a poor and contemptible object to one whose innermost thoughts are habitually fixed on the everlasting throne of the Infinite God. To one who has heard " the voice of the Beloved, leaping over the mountains, skipping over the hills," the praises and adulation of the crowd must ever sound empty as the murmurs of the idle wind, meaningless as the soughing of the restless sea ; while the glory of the world, when compared with the splendours of the heavenly palaces, can never seem more than the finery and vulgarity of a village fair.

In a word, a saint lives and moves among realities, while other men live and move among shadows, phantoms, and empty shows. A man of God apprises all things at their just value. He scans the entire earth ; his eagle glance sweeps from pole to pole, and his subtle and penetrating eye at once perceives that in the midst of an overwhelming variety of objects but one is truly valuable ; but one stands out peerless and without a rival. " On earth," he exclaims with the poet, " there is nothing great but man ; in man there is nothing great but mind ;" or, let us say, soul.

The soul ! A single soul—the soul of the merest

child, yea, of a poor, ignorant, ragged, deformed, outcast child, the poorest and lowliest throughout all London—is, indeed, worth more than towns and cities, and all that they contain ; worth more than thrones and dynasties, kingdoms and empires ; yea, more than glowing sun and glistening moon, and the countless host of diamond stars glimmering and sparkling on the brow of night, and quiring to the cherubim ! Of all created things on earth the soul alone lives a charmed life. It alone is immortal and imperishable. All else must pass ; all else must fall, and fade, and cease to be. The hardest rock, the toughest metal, the firmest wall of adamant, must crumble away. Weakness, frailty, change, dissolution, decay and death ! Ah ! these are words clearly inscribed and engraved by the hand of Omnipotence on everything around us and about us. The soul is the only exception. It, and it alone, survives them all. It will endure ; it will never pass away. Nations will come and go ; dynasties will rise and fall ; the mountains will be broken into pieces ; the seas will evaporate and disappear ; the earth itself will dissolve ; the very stars shall fall from heaven ; all creation will sway and totter to its ruin ; the entire universe shall be gathered up like a scroll ; but in the midst of the general destruction and universal change the soul will retain its youth and beauty, and never, never know corruption.

The soul ! Oh ! who will endow us with power to understand its worth and dignity ? Who will furnish us with the means of portraying, even in a limited degree, its exquisite grace and unrivalled loveliness ? Impossible in this life ! To understand the loveliness of the soul we must understand the loveliness of God, for to His image and

likeness it is made. All things, of course, babble in an inarticulate manner of Him who made them. The wide-stretching ocean fills our ears with distant murmurs of His immensity ; the soft-scented summer's breath discourses of His gentleness ; the scintillating stars emit subdued glimpses of His beauty ; and the tropical noonday sun, as it sets the heavens in a blaze, seems to reflect something of His magnificence.

Nature in all its moods, and poetry and art, music and song, in all their varied forms and infinite expressions, seem to lisp His name ; while earth and sky utter His praises and show forth His wondrous perfections. True. Yet not one of these—no, nor even all these put together—can tell us as much of God as could a single human soul in grace, were we but able to contemplate it in itself, and to understand and see it in its very essence, as we may one day hope to do in our home of light above.

Put all the visible creation on one side. Add world to world, and universe to universe, till mind grows weary and senses fail ; place these accumulations of wealth and beauty on one side of the balance, and on the other lay but a single soul, clothed with the garment of grace. It will outweigh them all. For as theologians teach, "one particle of Divine grace outvalues all the treasures of nature."[1]

God became incarnate for the sake of souls. The least soul has been purchased by the life-blood of an Infinite Being. There is nothing of such value. In fact, as compared with it, all else must be esteemed as just nothing at all. It is almost terrifying to think of the treasure we carry about in such fragile vessels. A shudder runs through our frame,

[1] "Bonum *gratiæ* unius majus est quam bonum *naturæ* totius universi."

and our heart's blood seems almost to cease flowing, as we contemplate the awful responsibility that is ours, and the irrevocable choice that awaits our decision, and on which an eternity, with all its fathomless heights and depths, lies balancing.

Every Catholic, duly instructed, knows and believes this. It is the teaching of the Church. The saints did more than merely know and believe. They likewise realised it. With them it was a practical truth, one that affected them, and exercised a most perceptible influence on their lives and actions.

They argued: 1. The earth harbours nothing half so precious as a human soul. 2. It is made to the image of God. 3. It is redeemed by the death of the Infinite. 4. It is destined to bask for ever in the sunshine of God's presence, etc. Such was their premise. The consequence was an easy one to draw, *viz.*, since the soul is all this, and far more, then it must follow that the noblest, highest and most blessed and privileged work is to help souls, to labour and toil for them, and to devote one's life, talents, wealth, strength and means to their service. It was thus that all the saints argued, and it was upon this principle that they all acted, each according to the measure of his opportunities.

We have a notable example in St. Charles Borromeo. Being a great saint, he was, as a consequence, marvellously illuminated in spiritual things; and being thus illuminated from above, he was enabled to recognise beyond others the incomparable beauty of a soul. He used often to enlarge on this topic, and to point out that "it is worth more than all the treasures of the world, as the devil well knows, who is eager for its dam-

nation. A single soul, he exclaimed, is worth the continual care of a pastor." On one occasion when trying to prevail upon a bishop to reside more continuously in his diocese, the latter excused himself urging, as a plea, that his diocese was but small, and could easily be managed by others. The saint, who was extremely grieved to find a prelate with so little pastoral zeal, made answer: "A single soul is worthy of the continual presence and guardianship of a bishop" (*Life*, p. 389). He not only manifested this zeal himself in his most laborious and incessant efforts to bring about the salvation of souls, but he strove by every means in his power to infuse a corresponding zeal into the hearts of all others, and especially into the hearts of his priests. On one occasion, in the diocesan synod, he placed before the clergy the example of St. Catherine of Sienna, in whom this zeal was so ardent that she offered herself to God to suffer the pains of hell in order to save souls who were on their way thither. After mentioning this fact he cried out with much fervour: "Oh, zeal, worthy of imitation by all Christians! if we could understand what it is to deliver a soul from hell I doubt not but many of us would risk any danger in hope of saving at least one."[1] How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace! No wonder, added St. Charles, that holy virgin of Sienna knelt down and kissed the very ground that had been trodden on by preachers because they were fellow-labourers of Christ. "There is nothing more pleasing to God," he continues, "than to be helpers of His Son, and to be willing to undertake the charge of souls. Our holy Mother

[1] St. Teresa writes: "To save even one I would most willingly endure many deaths."

the Church rejoices in nothing more than in those who bring souls again to spiritual life, thereby despoiling hell, defeating the devil, casting out sin, opening heaven, rejoicing the angels, glorifying the Blessed Trinity, and preparing for themselves an unfading crown" (see *Life*, p. 370). Indeed, it is the Holy Spirit Himself who assures us that "they that instruct many unto Justice shall shine as stars for all eternity" (Dan. xii. 3).

It would be impossible, within the narrow limits at our disposal, to narrate the many instances of the saint's untiring zeal for the salvation of the brethren. Let it suffice to say that their spiritual welfare was his continual thought night and day, and that both by word and example he ever strove with unflagging energy, to win men to God. No opportunity was allowed to pass, no occasion was suffered to go by without being turned to the profit and advantage of his people.

When travelling in the mountains he was wont to stop and hold converse with any of the poor mountaineers he chanced to meet, and stir up their faith and fervour by exhortations on spiritual things. Or he would gather a number of poor children together and teach them in simple words the Christian doctrines, and then present them with a little reward to give them courage and to stimulate their piety. Once when he was visiting the Levantine valley on foot, seeing a ragged little urchin sitting near a wretched hovel at some distance from the road, he went up to him, and though he was but a poor little child brought up among cattle and covered with dirt, he remained for some time by his side, and taught him, with great charity and sweetness, to say the Our Father and the Hail Mary. His desire to assist souls for

whom Christ died, was, indeed, co-extensive with humanity. He seemed to include in his solicitude every inhabited part of the world. He strove to benefit every country as far as it was possible; and for that purpose he kept up a continuous correspondence with bishops and archbishops, even in distant sees.

The example of St. Charles is, in a greater or lesser measure, the example of every saint. Nor could this be otherwise, for the love of our fellowmen is a test, as well as a testimony, of our love of God. And in proportion as our love of God gains strength and power, so will our love of the men and women, for whom He was crucified, likewise increase and strengthen.

One of the saddest and most deplorable facts, forced upon our attention at the present day, is the extraordinary little interest in man's salvation exhibited by people living in the world. We are not now referring to Anglicans, Wesleyans, Methodists and others who are dwelling in the twilight of heresy. We refer to Catholics who live and bask in the full brilliancy of the light of Divine truth, and who might, therefore, be expected to be more filled with apostolic charity, and more inflamed with zeal for the hundreds of thousands perishing in their very midst.

It is only natural that a man, who is at no pains to learn the unspeakable value of his own soul, should set but a low price upon the souls of his neighbours. One who is making no notable effort to ward off sin and defilement from himself, and to preserve himself from every stain, is not likely to put himself out to any great extent to rescue his neighbours from contagion. Nor will a lukewarm Catholic, who displays no ardent aspirations and longings

after perfection and a greater union with God, develop any marked zeal for the sanctification of his fellows.

No, we must commence with ourselves. "Well-ordered charity begins at home," as St. Thomas teaches. We must start with a strong sense of the exalted dignity and measureless greatness and beauty of our own soul when in a state of grace; we must grow familiar with the fact that it is veritably a child of heaven, an adopted son of God, a brother of Jesus Christ, and an heir to an everlasting throne, and a participator of the Divine nature. Then, but not till then, shall we be in a condition to appreciate at the same time the dignity and value of the souls of our brethren, made, as our own, to the image and likeness of God; and, as our own, purchased by the blood of an Infinite Victim. When once that startling truth is borne in upon us we shall certainly be the first to admit that no work or employment is so grand and ennobling in itself, so pleasing and gratifying to God, so honourable to ourselves or so profitable to others, as that which may promote the eternal welfare of the race.

Some Catholic laymen seem to think that such reflections have no application except to bishops, priests, monks and nuns, and to persons especially consecrated to God. What a mistake! Are not the multitudes scattered throughout the world their brethren as well as ours, and just as truly as they are, children of the one Eternal Father above? Are they not equally redeemed by the same saving Blood, and destined to the same sublime honours and rewards in the realms of fadeless glory in heaven? And have they not as much right to claim the interests and sympathy and solicitude of Catholic laymen as of priests and monks? Or

are lay people to watch the ravages of sin, and to contemplate the sea of iniquity raging on all sides, and souls perishing before their eyes, and to extend no hand to help a drowning brother, and to make no effort to rescue the perishing? In the midst of this wild, tempest-tossed, wind-swept, storm-driven world, are lay people to sit idly by, and fold their arms unconcerned, and throw the entire responsibility and care upon the priests? No! To look upon the cross of Christ, and to witness what He suffered for man's redemption, is to feel the necessity of co-operating with Him to the utmost of one's power. All good laymen feel the truth of this when it is properly put before them. What many need is merely that some one should point out to them *what* they might do, and the *value* of the least work undertaken for the spiritual welfare of their neighbours.

They often ask, in diffident tones: "Ah! yes; but what can *we* do? We can neither preach nor absolve, nor offer up the Adorable Sacrifice. We can effect so little." It might be retorted—Because you can do but little, is that any reason why you should do nothing? But, in sober truth, there is nothing little in any act or word that contributes, however slightly, to a soul's salvation; nothing trivial, nothing insignificant; nay, on the contrary, the smallest act is of inestimable value. And this is what, it appears to me, they should be made to realise. Is it not a great thing to enrich the poor; to feed the multitudes; to cure diseases; to still tempests; to create worlds; or to build up a universe? If so, it is a far greater thing still to diminish sin, to draw souls to God; to extend the faith, and to engraft virtue and eradicate vice. How clearly the saints understood this! "To

make one step in the propagation of the faith," says the generous-hearted St. Teresa, " and to give one ray of light to heretics, I would forfeit a thousand kingdoms !" (*vide Life*, chap. xxi.). It is of faith that one deliberate venial fault is an immeasurably worse evil than all physical pains, and than all material loss that man can sustain in this life ; and far more deserving of tears and lamentations. If this be absolutely certain it must be at least equally certain that to labour to diminish sin, infidelity, religious indifference, and neglect of spiritual duties, is a work of the very highest value and importance. If by the end of our lives we have succeeded in reducing the sum total of sins against God but by one we shall not have lived in vain. Yet, if in earnest, the least influential amongst us may do vastly more than that. And how ? the earnest layman may inquire. Then let me answer.

First, by preaching. Not in words, not in rounded periods, and balanced sentences, and rich sonorous phrases, but by the far more efficacious means of example. No words are half so eloquent or half so persuasive as facts. A good life is a continuous exhortation. No man can live among men as a true, fervent, practical, honest and sober Catholic without doing incalculable good. It is impossible. The mere presence of a noble, upright, generous character, who would scorn to do a mean, unworthy action, is itself a spur and an incentive to virtue. Such a man inspires respect, admiration and reverence ; and from admiration and reverence to imitation and emulation there is but a short and easy step. We instinctively seek to imitate what we admire, and to resemble those whom we esteem and honour.

Secondly, by showing, in a practical manner, some real interest and concern in the spiritual welfare of others, and desiring to be of use to them. Opportunities arise again and again of helping inquirers and assisting the spread of truth; explaining difficulties, dissipating doubts, answering objections, interpreting apparent contradictions; and, in a word, of giving a clear and intelligible account of the faith that they profess. If Catholic laymen could be persuaded to interest themselves more in studying the Apologetics, the *motiva credibilitatis*, the history of the Church, and of the Church's doctrine, and a score of kindred subjects, they might render invaluable service to souls.

Thirdly, by employing more generously in the service of the brethren whatever special gifts and talents they may possess. How much might be done by possessors of large fortunes to advance the reign of Christ upon earth! What real assistance they might render to struggling missions, poverty-stricken churches and schools, and to institutions at home, as well as to the important missionary enterprises in far distant and inhospitable lands! Much, no doubt, is lost by the injudicious application of charity; and much is spent to carry out a whim or a personal hobby, which might have been laid out to far greater advantage, so far as souls are concerned. But of this we will not now speak. Others, again, who are blessed with intellectual gifts—with learning, leisure and ability—might, surely, find abundant scope and occupation for their talents in other directions. To show what we mean we need but mention such names as Digby, Allies, W. G. Ward, E. H. Thompson, C. F. Allnatt, O. A. Brownson, F. Ozanam, De

Renty, Bernieres de Lourvigny, Du Pont (the holy man of Tours), the Comte A. de Mun, the late Herr Windhorst, to whom might be added very many others, and women as well as men.[1]

Fourthly, by throwing themselves generously into every good movement that is started with the approbation of authority, and uniting their efforts with those of others to make it a success. How frequently it happens that some enterprise, excellent in itself, and admirably conceived and planned, nevertheless proves abortive and fails because Catholics prefer to criticise than to co-operate; and to raise objections than to raise subscriptions. It would be impossible to enumerate the various useful works and ventures to which the past five and twenty or fifty years have given birth, and which require the zeal and generosity of the faithful if they are to continue to succeed; but perhaps we may venture to mention one or two as specimens of the rest. There is, *e.g.*, the Catholic Truth Society. It does an admirable work. And it may be helped in such a variety of ways. The rich may aid it by donations; the learned and leisured by writing tracts, papers and essays; the poor by buying the leaflets, which cost next to nothing, and scattering them among their friends and acquaintances; and all by speaking well of it and wishing it God-speed. Then there are Catholic papers which need support; and from time to time series of instructive lectures or addresses are arranged which (*a*) some might assist in delivering; which (*b*) others might encourage by attending, and which (*c*) all could help by advertising and

[1] The zeal and devotion, even of certain non-Catholics, such as the late Lord Shaftesbury, and the Quakeress Mrs. Fry, might bring a blush to many a Catholic.

making known among their companions. In fact, to one who ardently desires to help his brethren, thousands of ways lie open.

Fifthly, by encouraging and fostering religious and priestly vocations among the young. When parents are true, fervent Christians themselves, and Catholics to their very heart's core, they will certainly realise how unspeakable and unparalleled an honour and blessing it is to be able to reckon among their children at least one or two consecrated and dedicated to God and the service of the altar. Such parents will strive, by the simple force of word and example, to infuse their own spirit into their offspring, and again and again their ardent and continued prayers will obtain for son or daughter the gift of a supernatural vocation. The extraordinary thing is—first, that even fathers and mothers who are supposed to estimate spiritual things with some degree of accuracy should often be so little anxious to see their children raised to the sublimest of all dignities, *viz.*, to the unapproachable dignity of the priesthood; and secondly, that even among the better class of young men themselves so few should be stirred by this noblest form of ambition.

"The real misery of the Church," Cardinal Mermillod justly observes, "is to see how young men of the upper classes seem to be incapable of anything better than driving four-in-hand, shooting a cover, or applauding an actress. The honour of taking and holding the Blood of Jesus Christ is not given to them. Whole generations pass away before a family gives one son to the Church. Christian women!" he exclaims, "your mother hearts do not burn enough with Divine love that their exhalations should bring forth the heart of

a priest. Oh ! ask of God that your families may give sons to the Church . . . ask Him that you, in your turn, may have the courage of sacrifice, and that from you may be born an apostle : to speak to men about God, to enlighten the world, to serve Him at the altar. Is not this, after all, a grand and magnificent destiny ?" (*vide* Mermillod on *The Supernatural Life*). Truly a more magnificent one does not exist.

" It is beautiful that a man stand and speak of spiritual things to men " is the sentiment of even the wise old cynic of Chelsea. " A man even professing, and never so languidly making still some endeavour to save the souls of men ; contrast him with a man professing to do little but shoot the partridges of men !" [1]

The last, but by no means the least important, means of co-operating with Jesus Christ in the work of saving souls, is frequent and fervent prayer. " The continuous prayer of the just man availeth much." To assist one another in this way is, indeed, a sacred duty ; it is a special exhortation of the Apostle : " Pray for one another, that you may be saved." It is, furthermore, suggested by our Lord Himself when He teaches us to say, not, " deliver *me*," but " deliver *us* from evil," and not " lead *me*," but " lead *us* not into temptation," and so forth.

It appears that we priests do not take sufficient pains to impress upon the faithful the duty of labouring according to their opportunities for the salvation of souls ; nor do we sufficiently encourage them by pointing out and insisting again and again on the real value of the least act performed with this end in view. Perhaps if we were more zealous

[1] *Past and Present*, bk. iv., chap. i., p. 208.

ourselves we should be more careful and solicitous to secure the valuable co-operation of every good man and woman, and more anxious to instil into them an active and self-sacrificing charity. *Qui non ardet, non accendit.* If we are to lead others to exert and strain themselves in this Divine and inestimably grand work, it is imperative that we first lead the way, and by vigorous action rather than by speech. "Not the cry, but the flight of the wild duck," says a Chinese proverb, "leads the flock to fly and follow."

END OF VOL. I.

N.B.—For Index, see the end of the second volume.

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